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She Seemed to be Piercing the Western Gates

The Cry Heard

By ELLA PERRY PRICE

With an Introduction by Bishop Charles C. McCabe

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Introduction

"THE CRY HEARD" is a missionary story of thrilling interest. I have read every word, and like it exceedingly. Into it the author has woven the argument with consummate skill. There is vast hope in the fact of even one soul so surcharged with the love of missions. Others will catch the sacred flame. It will be a most useful book to the supreme cause in whose interest it was written, and ought to have a large circulation. At least two copies should be ordered at once for every Sunday-school library in all the land. It will help educate the young, and get them ready for the world-wide crusade that is sure to come. Speakers will find it a great help. Facts, illustrations, and arguments abound in its pages, which they can use to impress and stir their audiences. No man, woman, or child can read this book without feeling ever afterward that indifference to the cause of Missions is treason to the King.

CHARLES C. McCABE.

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
JAN 13 1959

To those in Darkness

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Chapter I

The Reception

It had been one of those golden days late in October, when the sun, with a last touch of summer warmth, had smiled in wondrous beauty upon the earth. The fallen leaves were carpeting the wooded slopes, and the yellow corn stood ripe for the huskers. The setting sun had flooded the sky with glory; and now the full moon was several hours high.

That afternoon, Mrs. Galbraith's carriage, filled with autumn fruitage and leaves, had been seen wheeling hurriedly along the avenue toward her city home; and, as the lights shone out from her parlors that night, passers-by caught glimpses of autumnal festooning.

"How is this, mother?" said Helen to Mrs. Galbraith, as she completed the artistic grouping of goldenrod and immortelles in the dining-room.

"Lovely, dear. Now I think we are through," as she put the last fern upon the snowy linen. "I am so thankful for this beautiful night."

"It is perfect," said Helen, "and everybody will be here that you invited."

"I hope so; I am so much interested in our young people. Every one of them is capable of exalted service, and, I think, would choose the better way, if it were made more attractive."

"If all were as happy in their work of love as you are, mother, it would not take the young folks long to

find out how much real pleasure there is in an unselfish life."

"You have found it out, have n't you, dear?" said the grateful mother, as she looked into the pure and lovely face of her only daughter. Helen kissed her mother, and went to dress for the evening.

For Mrs. Galbraith was to entertain, informally, her host of young friends,—clerks, students, teachers, society people and others,—most of them attendants of Dr. Winthrow's elegant church on the corner just up the avenue.

She was one of those whole-souled, generous people that everybody liked. Her conspicuous virtue was her faith in young people. She had not forgotten that she herself was once young, and that she needed entertainment; and, as was natural, no one would willingly disregard the hospitality of this delightful woman.

The response to her invitation was gratifying. By twos and threes they came, until her spacious rooms were well filled—a merry, laughing crowd, full of the gayety and hope of youth; and the youngest and gayest of the company, it seemed, as she moved in and out among her guests, was Mrs. Galbraith herself.

"Mr. Hetherington," said she to a tall, dark-complexioned young man, "let me introduce to you my friend, Frank Wilson. He is just out of college."

"Mr. Wilson, I am delighted to meet you. You are the one with whom I want to talk." For Ward Hetherington, a recent college graduate of high honor himself, was an enthusiast on the subject of

education. And the genial hostess left them to exchange views on that ever-important topic.

"Well, Alice," said Mrs. Galbraith, as she went smiling toward a company of interested listeners, "no need to introduce you;" for Alice Claymore, her bright blue eyes sparkling with merriment, had at once become, as was usual by her charming manner and brilliant conversation, the center of a considerable group.

"No, thank you; we are all acquainted."

Mrs. Galbraith went on, smiling pleasantly as she passed an admiring circle of young men, of which the beautiful Miss St. James was the center of attraction. Charmingly beautiful, as most people thought, was Miss St. James; but her beauty was of that cold, soulless type.

In a quiet corner, sober Miss Graham was discussing the best methods of teaching with another primary teacher, the sprightly Miss Gravelly. This same Miss Gravelly was a decided success in the public schools of the city, and it was always a privilege to chat with her upon the subject of teaching.

"Pardon me, girls," said Mrs. Galbraith, "but here is a young friend of mine, whom I want you to meet;" as she led in the direction of a disconsolate-looking young theologue, standing over against the wall.

"Mr. Thomas, I want to introduce you to Miss Graham and Miss Gravelly."

"I am glad to meet you, for I am nearly a stranger here." Then, mentally, after the manner of young preachers, "Miss Graham—Miss Gravelly—Miss Gravelly,—yes, I think I can remember that name.

Just apply the law of association, and I will have it; gravelly—gravel—a kind of soil."

"Mr. Thomas," explained Mrs. Galbraith, "has just taken charge of our thriving mission in the south part of the city, and will be glad to know some of our good Church people. And Miss Gravelly," she said, turning to Mr. Thomas, "lives near your mission, and you may find her able to help in your Sunday-school." So saying, she left them.

Whereupon she was met by the young but elegant Duke of Mansfield, who had formed one of the admiring group about Miss St. James. Indeed, he was stopping a few days with that young lady's mother, whose early years were spent in England, and had escorted Miss Isabella St. James to the reception.

"Mrs. Galbraith," said he, "I would very much like to meet Miss Claymore."

"I am sure she would be glad to make room among her friends for one more." Then to Alice, as they approached, "The Duke begs the privilege of joining this circle. May he?"

"Certainly," Alice said, heartily. And they were introduced, to the great delight of the Duke and to the sly pleasure of Alice; for she caught the snapping black eyes of Miss St. James flashing defiance at her from the center of her lessening group of admirers. For most of the other young men, following the example of the Duke, slipped away one by one, and joined the increasing crowd about Miss Claymore.

But that sort of amusement did not please Alice long. She took a moment's pleasure in humbling the haughty Isabella, but she soon excused herself; for she

wished to speak to her cousin Charles. And it was not long before the cunning Isabella was again smiling graciously upon a group of attentive listeners, while she cast triumphant glances at Alice, who stood "almost alone, talking with no one but her cousin Charles," as Miss St. James afterward told her own mother.

"O, Alice," said the facetious Charles, "Mrs. Fenton has invitations out for a progressive euchre party week after next. Can you go?" For to Charles Clarke the game wanted half its charms without his cousin Alice by his side, whose skillful manipulation of the cards was occasion of astonishment to all.

"How I wish I could! But I return to college to-morrow. I am fortunate to be here to-night; but the recitations were suspended this week to give opportunity to repair the damage to the university building by the recent electric storm. You know I can not afford to miss my recitations, even for a euchre party; I must not lose my rank the last year of the course."

"Bother the rank! You can make that up. You ought to mix in a little pleasure with your work. You know I left college at the end of my second year."

"I know you did, you indolent fellow; but an ambitious girl does not do that unless she is obliged to; and you ought not to have done it. But what about Mrs. Fenton's party? For, if I can not be there, I want to hear all about it."

"The Duke and Miss St. James will be there. Do you know," in a low tone, "she and her mother are just playing their cards for that young noble."

"O, hush! You must not talk that nonsense here."

At this juncture Ward Hetherington approached. While most of the others were indulging their chitter-chatter, he had been talking university interests to young Frank Wilson.

"How fares college?" said he to Miss Claymore. "I have not seen you long enough to ask about the professors and the girls and boys."

"We have a splendid Freshmen class this year. We have taken into our society eight of the loveliest, brightest girls you ever saw, the very best in the class."

"How can that be? I met Miss White, of a rival sorority, yesterday, and she dĕclared as emphatically that they had seven, the very cream of the class, in their society."

"Only two of their girls are classical, two are musical, and three take an elective course;" this with all the exactness of a college society girl. "Five of our girls are classical, one scientific, and two geniuses in music."

"I am sure your society is ahead of hers, then," said he, with a smile. "You go back to-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow night; for the building will be ready Monday, and I must be in the Chapter-house one afternoon this week to help the girls with our new library. A lawyer in the city, who married Laura Crampton, has given us some books and an elegant case."

"You are favored, indeed."

"When you come to see me graduate in June, you must surely call at the Chapter-house, and we will

show you our delightful home. Only the *sanctum sanctorum*—no man ever darkens the door of the inner sanctuary."

"Of course not. I know from personal experience that that inner shrine is inviolate. You know, our Chapter-house overshadows yours from the top of the hill; and it is but little more than a year since a few of us fellows left its protecting shelter to meet the tempests of real life. I have often since thought of what good Dr. Borden used to tell us, that the student lived very much in the imagination, but when he went out into life he would find that he had to come down to the practical. And so I have found it. The ideal world in which the student lives becomes less ideal as he rubs against the practical world in which most people move. But I need not exhort you. You might as well enjoy your little world while you are in it. How do you like your studies?"

"Very much. Psychology is a little knotty, but quite interesting. By the way, our class solemnized the burial of 'Old Psychol' the other day; but he came to life again. Dr. Cunningham was very late the morning we were to take our examination, and we thought he was not coming. So we formed a line and marched out across the ravine to the opposite hill-side, overlooking the city; and there, with mock reverence, Mr. Hedrick dug the grave and placed in it a copy of the precious book that Miss Jennings gave. Then oil was poured over the remains, and a match touched to the pile; and, as the flame and smoke ascended, we moved slowly around the burning pyre, singing the dirge. Then we wept over the ashes,

and jubilantly returned to the college, to find that the doctor had been sitting at his desk waiting for us fifteen minutes; and we had to take our examination after all. And when we were all in the room, he said something about doing unto others as we would have them do to us."

"That is just like the doctor. I like him, though," said Mr. Hetherington, warmly.

"Yes, indeed; I will work harder for him than for any other professor in college."

"This is refreshing, to hear from the old college on the hill. But, if you do not mind, I will make the acquaintance of our new preacher, of the South-side Mission. He evidently does not know our young people. I will see you again."

"Very well; here is Mr. Bennett, one of father's clerks, looking a little forsaken. I will chat with him." For, if Alice saw any one who was particularly embarrassed, or lonely, she was sure to go to him, and she seldom failed to make him forget his awkwardness. She had the happy faculty of bringing out the best in nearly every one she met. Some of her friends occasionally criticised her, but she only laughed merrily, and went on. Miss St. James had once said to her, "I do not see how you can like so many fellows, with whom you never go." For Alice had her own notions, and there were very few young men, even among her warm friends, with whom she cared to go into company.

"I think I will introduce myself," said Ward to Mr. Thomas.

"I have wanted to meet you, Mr. Hetherington,

for I have heard of some of your doings. If I am rightly informed, I see some of their effects at the South-side."

"Well, yes," with some hesitancy, "my friends call me a fanatic in such effort."

"A few more fanatics of that sort would not hurt the world any. You will stimulate others to do the same."

"I hope so. But I must not be too sanguine, though I build somewhat upon the possibilities of my life."

"Yours is as noble a purpose as one could ask," said Mr. Thomas.

"I only trust," was the reply, "that my 'vision of doing good' will not be like that of Dickens's character, Charles Darney, who went over into France, thinking to quell the Revolution, but made no impression, and barely escaped the guillotine."

Apart from them stood a genial man of middle age, who had moved among the younger guests, much to their delight. He now desired an introduction to Mr. Thomas.

"A gentleman of wide travel and learning," Mrs. Galbraith said of him, as she left him to the preacher.

"This is a rare treat," said Mr. Thomas, addressing Dr. Powers.

"Thank you; the privilege is mutual. I never tire of young folks. This is the first occasion of the kind I have enjoyed since my return."

"How long have you been in this country?"

"I landed in New York just a month ago to-day, and spent a week with my people."

"Has the ocean lost its charms for you?"

"Well, scarcely. And yet, to me, they are of a peculiar sort. I usually keep my berth during the whole voyage."

"That is unfortunate," said Mr. Thomas.

"I can fully sympathize with the Englishman who said that the first day he was seasick he was afraid he should die; the second day he was afraid he should not die; and the third day he did not care whether he died or not."

"Then you would not elaborate upon the delight of an ocean voyage?"

"Not from a personal standpoint."

Strange, but the gray eyes of Dr. Powers seemed too penetrating, as he earnestly scanned the face of his new acquaintance. And when, at the close of a very animated conversation upon European cities, and more remote, though no less interesting, oriental scenes, they parted, Mr. Thomas had a vague feeling that that man, in more serious relation, would again cross his path.

By this time the vivacious Miss Claymore had found her way to a sad-eyed, sweet young girl, sitting wearily before the grate in the back parlor. Very pretty, though somewhat pathetic, she looked, as she lay back in the big chair, with the flames lighting up her pale face. This was Mrs. Fenton's crippled daughter, Lucile. Everybody loved Lucile with a tender love, and everybody felt like crying at the sight of her delicate face; for two years ago the roses were brilliant in her cheeks, and she was the life of many a social gathering.

"O, Alice, you dear girl! I have so longed to mingle with all of these merry young folks. It is good of you to sit down with me," as Alice drew a chair close to her.

"O, you naughty little Lucile; you know I am not good. You yourself have given me more than one lecture."

"And I may give you another, if you stay here. You know, since the accident my thoughts flow in somewhat sober channels." Eighteen months before, a span of spirited horses, taking fright, had overturned her carriage, and she was taken up unconscious from the pavement.

"Of course," said Alice, "but you are better."

"No, Alice; I am not really better. I can sit up a little, to be sure. I have not the heart to tell mother, but I know she will not have me long. But never mind that now; let us talk of something brighter."

"Talk on, my sweet Lucile."

"They tell me you return to college to-morrow."

"Yes."

"Mother will be so much disappointed, for she wanted you at her card party."

"And I want to be there, too."

"Do you know, Alice, I am glad you will not be there. And it just makes my heart ache to think that mother will give such a party."

"Of course, you can not enjoy these gatherings now. Wait until you are stronger."

"But I see more clearly than I once did. My affliction has not been fruitless. Sometime mother,

too, will see differently, and the cost of her change will not be too great."

"Your carriage is at the door, Lucile," said Mrs. Galbraith, as she came into the parlor where the two sat chatting. And, as the stricken but lovely girl rode away toward her beautiful home, Alice returned to the merry crowd.

"Is n't it dreadful that Lucile's health does n't improve? I am sure I could n't bear it," said Grace Chandler, popularly known as "the jolliest girl in town."

"Yes, it is sad," said Helen Galbraith. "If she only could get well. She has developed such a beautiful character during the last year. She might do wonders among the young people; and yet she may do more as it is."

"How is it that people must suffer in order to develop character? If that is necessary, we all ought to covet affliction; and that does n't agree with my theology."

"O, I do not think it always is necessary; but we learn more all at once under affliction. It is a bitter lesson, but it is well learned."

"Well, I think I should be satisfied with less proficiency," added Grace.

"I suppose most of us would. We always shun the experiences that really benefit us most. But when they do come, is it not gracious that they are freighted with such good?" And the thoughtful face of Helen Galbraith emphasized the truth which her lips uttered. For she was one of those earnest characters that grow with acquaintance.

Mrs. Galbraith now stood before a young married woman of great energy and determination.

"We miss your husband, Mrs. Crowell."

"I greatly regret that he could not be present. But he was called to the eastern part of the State last night, and could not possibly return before to-morrow."

"Of course, railroad men must go when they are sent," answered Mrs. Galbraith. "But I hope we may soon meet him in our home."

"Thank you; he will certainly be glad to call."

"By the way, Mrs. Crowell, how do you relish your late honor?"

"O dear!" said she, with a half-suppressed sigh, "it seems a heavy burden upon shoulders so inexperienced. The honor is altogether outweighed by the responsibility. Yet, a few months later I may be better able to answer your question."

By this time, Charles Clarke had secured a somewhat belated introduction to the new minister; and debate waxed warm, as the arguments flew for and against the practice of the law. For the shrewd and worldly Charles had readily noted the superior intellect of Mr. Thomas, and had made bold to urge the advantages of the law for a young man who wished to gain distinction; for he took it for granted that all other young men, like himself, must have an eye to personal advantage in the selection of their life work. And so he was making a somewhat futile effort to persuade the young preacher that he had missed his calling. But he continued, even in the face of certain vanquishment.

"Why, a man of your ability in time could command an annual income of twenty-five thousand dollars; and, if you reach the highest office in the gift of the Church, it will not be more than four or five thousand."

"Opportunity is not measured by income, my friend."

"It does not lack much of it. Money rules this world. You know that yourself. Is not that so?"

"To be sure, money is a power; but no amount of money can weigh over against crushed convictions. If a man is convinced that he can best serve the world through the practice of law, then his money would be a power."

"O, well," with a toss of the head, "I suppose you are elected to the ministry; and I can not break the eternal decrees. I am compelled to abandon you to the tender mercies of your calling. Good night! We shall meet again." And bowing politely, he passed on.

"A little stiff," Charles pronounced him a few minutes later, when he and Alice happened to be standing together. "Nevertheless, I admire him. And I have altogether too much respect for myself, ever again to be caught in argument with the young theologian upon a question of morals. I can talk real estate; but it will be well for me to leave the department of ethics to those better informed. At least, I shall not conflict again with the preacher of the South-side."

"A very wise conclusion, my good cousin," said Alice, approvingly.

"Well, Miss Galbraith," said Ward, accosting that young lady, "you and your mother are to be congratulated upon your success as hostesses."

"Thank you; and I am sure we are to be congratulated upon the hearty response of our guests."

"They could not help responding to such hospitality. This is certainly the most delightful gathering I have attended for years. Everybody is having a right royal time. There seem to be no gaps anywhere in the conversation."

"Then it has not been dull? You know, some of our people think that if the young folks can not dance or play cards they will have a stupid time."

"That is because others do not know how to entertain the young. Your mother has no difficulty. Some of these young people will carry from here a nobler conception of life than they had when they came. I am heartily glad your mother has given us this object lesson. I beg your pardon; but I think your mother wishes to speak to you."

"Excuse me, please."

Fair Helen! Little can we guess what will transpire before we again look upon thy face.

"And now, Alice," said Ward, turning to Miss Claymore, for they were friends of long standing, and more often than otherwise addressed each other by their given names, "if you are through talking, we will follow the example of some of the rest of the company, and go."

"O, I shall never be through talking; I might as well stop right now."

And there passed out into the night a company of bright young men and women,—some thoughtful, some careless, but all capable of great usefulness, if rightly touched. Here was a problem; and Mrs. Galbraith had done something toward its solution. But the stars of that autumn night looked down upon life paths differently ordered by the crossing of lines during the previous hours of the evening.

Chapter II

"I Mean to Live while I Live"

It was the first Sunday after graduation,—a quiet, balmy June day. The lawns along the avenue lay clothed in deep verdure, while overhanging elms shadowed their foliage upon the smooth pavement. From the stone steps of St. Paul's, Alice Claymore, daintily attired in white, stood looking for a moment down upon the stretch of beautiful homes.

A Sunday-school class of appreciative boys, ranging in age from eight to twelve years, had turned out in full force, in true boyish greeting. Her long absence during the college year had somewhat thinned the ranks; but the announcement of her presence was signal for the return of almost every wanderer. And during the Sunday-school hour, four rows of eager faces had responded to the tactful presentation of the Bible story of Peter and Cornelius.

"Peter must 'a' been like some folks are now," observed one wide-awake lad during the progress of the lesson.

"How so?" asked Alice.

"He did n't b'lieve in anybody but his own people; though, after he had a vision he did. I can't see why God do n't send down sheets full of animals to folks now. I 'd think it would make it lots easier for 'em to understand what he meant."

Now this boy, being the son of a devoted woman,

was well primed; and, had not the tap of the bell stopped further discussion, he might have put forth some very unwelcome questions.

As Miss Claymore stood thus upon the stone steps, she saw this inquisitive lad, hand in hand with his little butterfly of a sister, in the distance, turn from the avenue into a quiet street toward their cozy home. As she watched them trudging on together she smiled.

Happy young woman, standing there with the glow of recent victory still upon her cheek! A brilliant college career was just passed. Before her lay enviable opportunities for usefulness and culture. Sunday-school work was her delight; and in that she was counted among the first in the city. Boys—even the incorrigible, one might almost say—she could win like a charm. It sometimes seemed that every boy on the street knew "Miss Alice." Then, the fact that her father was a rich merchant of wide reputation placed her at once well up on the social ladder. The best that a large city could afford was constantly at hand. And, if the desire for culture should lead her farther, there was the wealth to take her where her inclinations led. Though she did not consciously place hope in these favorable surroundings, yet they gave color to her meditations. Her thoughts thus full of confidence for the years to come, she was about to step down upon the walk.

"O, I thought you had gone," said Ward Hetherington, as he came out of the church. "Were you going now?" And they walked up the avenue together.

"You are glad your college days are over?"

"Well, yes—and no. I sometimes think that I should appreciate a repetition of the same course."

"I suppose one never does feel satisfied with one's college record. I am sure I did not, and I have yet to find any one who did. We are merely introduced to various fields of thought with the expectation that we will continue our investigations in subsequent years."

"Do you find much time for graduate work?"

"The demands of business are certainly very exacting; though not many days pass that I do not find an hour or two for my books. But, digressing a little, whether you are glad or not that your college days are over, I am sure that your boys are delighted."

"Well," said Alice, "from the number of questions they asked to-day, I should judge that they had been laying in a stock during the whole year. I believe I never before talked so much in one short hour. I was actually tired."

"You never know where boys will go with their questions."

"I should think not! They will lead one into most irrelevant and absurd situations."

"Were you at church this morning?"

"Yes, indeed!"

"A magnificent sermon by Dr. Winthrow, was it not?"

"Certainly; he always preaches well," replied Alice; "but I am sure I did not like his theme to-day."

"Of course not, if you are not interested in it. To my mind, he is always inspiring; but he never so stirs me as when he proclaims a world-wide redemption."

"But I do not see it as you do," she said. "There are want and misery enough within the sound of our own church-bell. Even yesterday afternoon, in calling upon members of my class, I found aching hearts. For my part, I do not see how I could give any more time and sympathy than are demanded right here. Of course, others may do that work, if they want to. Possibly it ought to be done; but I am not the one to do it. I have already as large a place as I can fill."

They now stood in front of Mr. Claymore's handsome home.

"Will you come in?"

"Not this afternoon, thank you. You know that mother always claims an hour with me after Sunday-school. But, if I may, I will call on my way to church this evening."

"Well, yes, you may, if you will promise not to say anything upon your favorite topic."

"Yes; I will promise this time," said he, smiling.

"And gather force for a heavier volley next time," laughed Alice.

A few days later, she and her mother sat chatting over their coffee at the breakfast-table.

"Mother, I think I have a plan that you would like."

"Well, dear, what is it?"

"You know Aunt Sarah Edgecomb, near Bloomingdale. She has often urged me to come and spend the summer. Of course, I can not do that; but I can stay two weeks; and you can take my class of boys the Sunday that I am away. And I would like to

take Lucile along, for I am sure that a little change from the heat of the city would do her a world of good. She is a little stronger just now, and could endure the trip. And two weeks might do something toward her recovery. Indeed, she might want to spend the summer. I know that Aunt Sarah would be glad to have her there, she is so lovable. I think of an angel every time I see her. Such purity and perfection I think I never knew. What do you say?"

"I like your plan. You talk with Mrs. Fenton, and write to Aunt Sarah, and in three days you may be off."

At nine o'clock next Monday morning, Alice and Lucile, having left the train, were riding cozily in Mrs. Edgecomb's comfortable carriage along the highway toward the farm. The sun's beams were not yet unmerciful; and the gently-rolling meadows and wheat-fields, broken here and there by narrow strips of timber, stretched away on either side, while now and then a wide reach of corn-land bent its tassels gently beneath the summer wind as the happy girls rode by.

"O, Alice," said Lucile after a prolonged silence, "I am almost too happy to speak. What beauty this world wears! If it were not for the wretchedness of human beings, it would be heaven right on this earth. But out in the country, where we have the breath from the meadows, we almost forget that all people are not happy. I sometimes wish I could forget all about it; for I seem so helpless to do anything for the relief of human woes."

"Do as I do; do not think anything about them,

except the few cases that come under your immediate notice. I know that the woes of humanity are enough; but I can not make them any less by thinking about them, so I shall not bother myself. But, really, between you and Mr. Hetherington, I begin to think myself a renegade."

"Well, if between Mr. Hetherington and me a reformation could be effected in your case, we might congratulate ourselves upon having done a meritorious work," laughingly put in Lucile; for she never could be very severe with the noble, generous-hearted Alice. For, with her frequent lack of seriousness, Alice Claymore was a loyal friend to those she knew, and a sympathetic helper of all who came within her immediate touch. As for those beyond the reach of her vision and the sound of her voice, she had not learned to care for them.

"You and Ward would have me pull all the flowers and feathers off my hat, brush all the curls out of my hair, take all the velvet and ribbon from my dress, and look like the faded relic of a bygone age," she said, laughingly.

"How you exaggerate! Who wants you to become a fanatic? You need not check your vivacious spirits, but vent them where they shall count for the most. That would not make a Puritan of you. But I suppose you wish I would stop."

"On the contrary, I really enjoy your sermons, you darling little preacher. But here we are;" as she drove into Mrs. Edgecomb's pleasant yard.

Mrs. Edgecomb, a calm, kindly-faced woman, met them as the horse stopped at the side porch.

"Aunt Sarah," said her niece, "this is my friend, Lucile Fenton," as the two girls alighted from the carriage.

"Miss Fenton, or may I call you 'Lucile'?"

"I wish you would," said Lucile gratefully. "And will you be 'Aunt Sarah' to me, too?"

"That is just what I want to be," said the dear woman. And the frail girl was at home at once.

The same afternoon, while Mrs. Edgecomb was seated to rest and chat with the girls in her own pleasant parlor, a horse and carriage turned toward the gate, and Mrs. Latimer stepped out upon the stile. Soon she came in, leading by the hand a three-year-old, chubby little fellow, whom Mrs. Edgecomb addressed as Jamie. The formality of the introduction over, Mrs. Edgecomb and her three guests entered upon an hour of miscellaneous conversation, which caused the time to pass so rapidly that Mrs. Latimer sprung to her feet in surprise, as the spirited little clock on the mantel rattled off the hour of five. For, there were the chickens to feed, the cows to milk, and the horses to turn to pasture before dark; and her own hands must do it all; for Mr. Latimer had gone to the city that day, and had left her to do the chores.

But, to return to the conversation of the hour, the good woman and her boy had no more than entered the parlor when Alice, drawing the little fellow to her side, soon had him so rapt in what she was saying that he was utterly oblivious to his mother and all else. Older ears were listening, too, and eyes were watching, as she drew from her pocket a bit of small wire, and, bending it into the shape of a miniature shepherd's

crook, lifted imaginary sheep out of ravines, in explanation of David's boyhood occupation as he tended his father's sheep on the hillsides of Judea.

"I am amazed," said Mrs. Latimer, quietly. "That is the first time I ever knew him to go to a stranger." Then turning to Alice, "You must be a baby charmer, Miss Claymore."

"I never thought of that."

"She certainly is a boy charmer," said Lucile. "Every small boy on the street claims her as his particular friend, and, when occasion demands, considers himself appointed her especial guardian and escort. I never heard of anything like it."

"Miss Fenton," laughed Alice, "if you wish to be taken for a woman of veracity, you should make your statements with moderation."

"I can easily believe every word she says, when I look at that boy of mine," suggested Mrs. Latimer, whose little son seemed to have quite transferred his affections to his new friend. "Living in a city, you certainly have large opportunity to exercise your peculiar gift," addressing Miss Claymore.

"All the opportunity I can improve."

"You teach in the Sunday-school?"

"Yes, I have a class of those boys of whom Miss Fenton has given so graphic a description."

"They must require about all your leisure time, I should think."

"Well, no, not really. At least, I do not give it all to them."

"Of course, I should have known that; for a large city Church does not confine its operations to the Sun-

day-school. You must have a flourishing Missionary Society."

"We have, I think."

"Do n't you find that very interesting?" then, without waiting for an answer, "I have so longed to be identified with this work, since I was denied the privilege of going myself. Yet my lot has been cast with this small country Church; and there are so few of the women here that seem able to take interest in anything outside of what has occupied their thought heretofore. I must except Mrs. Edgecomb, of course. Possibly you could give us a little light, Miss Claymore," said Mrs. Latimer.

"O, I am not a member of the Society; you will have to ask Lucile."

"Why, I thought of course you were. You have so many advantages in the city—"

"That 's the trouble," interrupted Alice, "we have altogether too many advantages; one can not take them all in."

"But the missionary work; that is the last one I should leave out."

"Possibly," replied Alice, "but I mean to live while I live."

"What, my dear, while two-thirds of the world are dying while they live?" queried Mrs. Edgecomb.

"Why, yes, if you wish to put it that way," replied Alice. "My dying would not help them to live, that is certain."

"In a sense, that is true, and in another sense, it is not true," said her aunt. "I take it that you can win your boys only as you give yourself for them. Should

you approach your class in the same spirit, your power over them would be gone."

"Yes, Aunt Sarah; but you must know that a young woman has demands, as well, outside of Church—literary and social demands, that brighten her life and really make her more capable."

"Certainly; but one can scarcely dismiss a work like this with the excuse that she means to live while she lives. It is for us who are living to give to those who are dying."

So the hour passed; and Mrs. Latimer and little Jamie were gone. Mrs. Edgecomb went to her own tasks; and the girls, less disposed than usual to talk, picked up books that lay near them on the table, and began to read. Lucile, unable to fix her mind steadily upon the page before her, looked up occasionally from the story of Pilgrim journeying toward the Holy City, to cast a look of sadness upon her friend. But Alice, apparently unconscious of any attention from Lucile, read on with eagerness, until she closed the book upon the death of Hamlet.

"If I had the genius of Shakespeare, I would give all I possess," was her remark.

"And not count it too much to give?"

"No, indeed! Who would?"

"Possibly, no one, but"—and then Mrs. Edgecomb entered, and they went out to supper. And during the partaking of the delicious evening meal of hot biscuits and berries rich with country cream, Alice laughed and chatted like one who, indeed, was living.

On a neighboring farm, Mrs. Latimer, with little Jamie trudging by her side, worked busily until sun-

down, before their chores were done. Then Jamie ate his bowl of bread and milk and went to sleep. The mother kissed him, as he lay with rosy cheeks upon the pillow. Then, combing her hair and donning a fresh lawn dress, she awaited the return of her husband. She was about to sit down to read, when she stopped at the dresser to bend lovingly over an irregular bouquet of red clover that Jamie had gathered in the fence corners while she was milking the cows. "He does love flowers so, the dear little fellow!" thought she. And, with one more solicitous look at the sleeper, she sat down to read.

Before opening her book, however, she recalled the conversation of the afternoon with the young ladies at Mrs. Edgecomb's. Somehow, that night, as she had gone about her work, a feeling of heaviness clung to her; for now and then she seemed to hear again the words of Alice Claymore, "I mean to live while I live." "That does n't seem right to me," she thought, "for a young woman of Miss Claymore's capability and opportunity to meet the needs of this world in that spirit. I half believe she did not realize what she was saying." And yet Mrs. Latimer, as she sat alone that night, could think of many who, in face of the world's accumulated woes and the fact that the multitudes are longing for redemption, were content to live while they lived, little heeding that piteous cry from over the sea.

And she could think of some, too, scores of them—and the thought comforted her—who had resolved to help others to live: Mary Moffat, who thought that kings could not do her the honor she had, in sitting

among the native worshipers of South Africa; and that other good woman, whose memory will be green as long as the Woman's College at Lucknow stands; and still another heroic woman, who, with her band of missionaries, had waited in the mountains, outside the gates of Thibet—waited for those gates to swing open, that she might enthrone Christ in place of the Grand Lama. And O, how gladly would she have counted herself among the number!

Then, for a moment, she closes her eyes, and behold! in India, a young woman lies dying, broken-hearted, because the Bible-reader can no more visit her village, her young life going out in sadness, because some one meant to live while she lived. And, again, behold! in China an old woman lies dying. Yet, she raises her hands and smiles. "O, look! look!" she says; "see, the door is open. O, how beautiful! Yes, it is my mansion." And she folds her hands and sleeps in Jesus, because some one meant to help others to live while she lived.

"O," thought Mrs. Latimer, "who would not, at the judgment-day, rather greet this redeemed mother from China, than meet the reproachful look from that sorrowing daughter of India! Ah, in that day there will not be much consolation in the thought that we lived here, unless, at the same time, we had helped others to live."

But Mrs. Latimer was roused from her meditations by a familiar step on the side porch; and she opened the door to admit her husband.

The honest-hearted farmer, after a tiresome day in the city, was so pleased to see his wife in her pretty new

lawn that he failed at first to notice anything unusual in her manner; but presently he said, "Why are you so serious to-night?"

"There is no very great reason for it," she replied; "but I have often told you, as you remember, how I once longed to work in the foreign field; and to-night, as I sat here alone, all the old longing came back. That must have been why I seemed a little sober, I suppose."

"But, darling, do n't you know how I have needed you during these years?"

"Yes, I know," she said; "and I am content that it should be so. If only there were some way to help that work, it would take away the lingering regret."

"Well, dear, how do you know but that you might, after a while, do that."

"One thought," she responded, "gives me comfort."

"And what is it?"

"Our sweet little Jamie. I think of him as my little missionary; and I hope that, some day, he may do the work that I was kept from doing."

"Maybe, dear; but here is something that I brought for him," and, unrolling a package, he displayed a little wooden jug.

"This is for his pennies," he said, holding it up for her to see.

"O, I am so glad, for that will please him!" And rising soon after, she put the jug in a place convenient for the reception of such small contributions as should, from time to time, slip down through its narrow opening. "And here," she said, "goes the first penny—one that Mrs. Hargrave handed him through the gate to-

night, as he was gathering those red clovers. She is such a beautiful young bride, but too delicate for a farmer's wife; and yet she is as happy as a bird. Evidently she thinks it is all right."

"Then you will enjoy her as a neighbor."

"Yes, indeed, I love her already. And she thinks there never was such a child as Jamie." And, turning once more, she looked into the face of her peacefully sleeping boy.

Earlier that evening, while Alice and Lucile rested in peace and quiet in their aunt's country home, the great city was the scene of varied operations, not the least interesting of which, to our two absent friends, would have been an episode in Mrs. Chandler's parlor. Mr. Hetherington, Mr. Thomas, Grace Chandler, and others were to hold a few minutes' consultation in the interests of the local union of young people's organizations. The most of the company were already present when Mr. Thomas came. He passed among them, renewing his acquaintance with those he had met eight months before at Mrs. Galbraith's reception. His memory for faces was excellent, and, thanks to his success in applying the law of association, he seldom failed to remember a name. So it was with the utmost confidence that he addressed a black-eyed young lady who had been introduced to him at the reception as Miss Gravelly.

"Good evening, Miss Clayly;" this with mental blessings on the head of the man who first invented the law of association; for, to Miss Gravelly, more than to any other one there, would he have appeared at his best.

Miss Gravelly wanted to laugh outright; and she could not repress a smile, as she said, "Not Clayly, but Gravelly is my name."

O, O! he had associated this charming young woman with the wrong soil. What a humiliating blunder! To add to his annoyance, others had heard his salutation, and, in spite of themselves, were smiling at his confusion. Glad would he have been for a sudden opening in the floor beneath him. Here was a very embarrassing break in the record of his successful application of the familiar law. In the conversation that followed, however, the inadvertence was apparently forgotten.

"Such a happy union of business and religion there seems to be in your life, my friend," he said later in the evening, as he walked toward his boarding-house, arm in arm with Ward Hetherington.

"How could it be otherwise with a Christian man?"

"I confess I do not know how it could; but you sometimes find a man's business and his religion very wide apart."

"Such a man's religion you will admit to be of a very inferior quality. It will hardly stand good in the day of adversity."

"No, indeed." And with a word of adieu they parted, to take their different ways home.

Ward Hetherington's business prospects were continually brightening. That he might familiarize himself with the details of the work, upon leaving college two years before, he had become a clerk in his father's prosperous drygoods store. At the end of a year, the death of one of the firm had placed him in partnership

with his father, Mr. Claymore, and others. And the firm, Hetherington, Claymore & Company was launched upon a period of unprecedented prosperity. Ward possessed that keen business insight that made him an invaluable partner. And fortunate was the house that derived profit from his commercial success.

Upon entering the office a day or two after the night referred to, the position of buyer for the firm was offered to him. He hesitated a little to take it. Content, however, to trust to the judgment of the older partners, he entered heartily upon his new duties.

In all this his mother was deeply interested. That evening he had so much to tell her, that it was with some impatience he waited after dinner for guests to depart, that he might have her awhile to himself. To her, in large measure, Ward owed his noble character; for, though possessed of considerable wealth, she had been careful to keep that in the background; so that he had grown up to feel that his riches should only be used as a means to a noble end, and not as a false pedestal on which to raise a few favored people above their apparently less fortunate fellows.

"Mother," said he, when they had finally settled into their favorite corner behind the vines on the front porch, "I do not know that I could ask anything more in the way of business prospects or Christian opportunity than I now have."

"Well?" for in his voice there was the suggestion of an adversative.

"I wish Alice Claymore would take a little more thoughtful view of life." For, as has been intimated,

with her devotion to the Church was a certain devotion to the world, that, to the sober mind of Ward Hetherington, was altogether inconsistent. She, however, could not see the harm in it. She could not abide these long-faced Christians, and meant to mix a little gayety in with her religion. She thought she should come out as well in the end, and have a very much better time while she went along. So it happened that her cousin Charles frequently secured her company to a select party at cards, or in the parlor dance, or to a choice play at the theater.

As for Ward himself, though very popular, both because of the social standing of his family, and because of his own worth, he had long since ceased to receive invitations to gatherings of the kind. So that he and Alice were seldom together at social functions. The warm friendship, however, that had long existed between the two families, continued in them. He could but note, also, with some reassurance, that it was the company of her Cousin Charles that she always accepted, and that other suitors were promptly, but kindly, rejected. So it was that he expressed to his mother that evening the wish that his friend would view life more thoughtfully.

"It may be," suggested his mother, "that you are a little too exacting. I think you are not, however; but to put a face with so thoughtful a cast as yours upon a girl of Alice Claymore's disposition, would produce a comical effect."

"O, do not mention it," laughed Ward; "I want all her vivacity; but I want it turned to the best account.

When I think of what a power for good she might be, I am pained that she should thus sow her influence to the whirlwind."

"But, Ward, just give her a little time, and she will look at some of these questions differently. Depend upon it, she will rightly adjust herself in the end."

"But time is golden. She should improve it now."

"She may be nearer the desired change than you think."

"I hope so," with some doubt. And after more of such words of suggestion and encouragement as mothers know how to give their sons, Ward and Mrs. Hetherington entered the house.

Chapter III

What if You Had Never Heard?

A FEW evenings later, the two young ladies sat in the late twilight upon Mrs. Edgecomb's cool porch. The glory had nearly faded from the sky, yet a little of its reflection was thrown upon the face of Lucile, as, reclining in an easy chair, she looked peacefully toward the far-off west. Alice, sitting on the steps at her feet, and noting the faint glow upon her friend's cheek, thought it an ill omen; for she seemed to be piercing the western gates, even to the Eternal City. She had seen that look upon her face once before, and knew too well what it meant. And her heart ached, as she tried to keep back the tears.

"O, girls," said Mrs. Edgecomb, coming out to join them, "I have something to suggest."

"What is it, Aunt Sarah?" asked Lucile.

"How would you like to attend the camp-meeting at Willowdale to-morrow?"

"Capital!" put in Alice.

"You know since Uncle William is gone, I am needed here nearly all the time to give direction to the farm-hands. But I have arranged my work so I can be away to-morrow."

"Won't it be delightful," said Lucile, "to have another ride along that beautiful country road? And, then, to think of resting all day in the woods!"

"You are sure you are strong enough?"

"O, I think so, Aunt Sarah. I have gained strength every day since I came, and riding does not tire me much."

So it was that, when the sun came peeping through the timber the next morning, the two girls, Mrs. Edgecomb, and little Lucy were on their way to the campgrounds. Entering the grove in time for the early morning service, they took comfortable seats inside the big tent. Strangely enough, the programs revealed the fact that it was Missionary-day.

"I am so glad," said Lucile, as her eager face scanned the items.

"I would like to have been here yesterday," suggested Alice, when she learned that it had been Educational-day. And she looked a little bothered. "But," said she, "I can go out and rest in our tent when I am tired."

"You will not find this as dull as you think, Alice. Before the day is over, you will see differently."

"Well, that is not very comforting," said Alice. "I associate missionary work with a life of extreme deprivation. You would like to have me join the procession of dull, plain, sober, long-faced women. Then, with my little book of receipts, you would have me go about collecting quarters from the few half-interested members who never attend the meetings, and who pay their dues very grudgingly."

"Now, you exaggerate again. There are more interested people than you think, and there are fewer that pay grudgingly than you suppose. But, then, even if the conditions were as you represent them, do you not see how much a few ambitious girls like you could

do to introduce into this work a more intelligent and liberal spirit? But here is Dr. Powers, who is to deliver the address of the morning." And the gentleman whom the girls had so admired in Mrs. Galbraith's parlor stepped upon the platform.

"Now, I must be bored for a whole hour," whispered Alice. "I shall be a martyr for the next sixty minutes."

"I trust you will bear your martyrdom heroically," laughed Lucile.

The first hymn was announced: "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun." Presently the text: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen. I will be exalted in the earth." "Be still;" and Alice Claymore's eyes were intently fixed upon the speaker; "and know that I am God;" and it seemed a "still small voice" awoke in her soul. "I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." And there seemed in front of the tall form of the speaker to be drawn a veil; and, in spite of herself, there stood out before the mind of Alice Claymore the living Christ, as Dr. Powers portrayed the glorious triumphs of the Cross among the heathen, and poured forth in eloquent and persuasive language his profound conviction that the day was hastening when the Lord should indeed be exalted in the earth. Throughout the long discourse, strange as it seems, Alice Claymore saw but the form of the Crucified One. Other as powerful sermons she had heard; but, somehow, in this one, in an unusual manner, the message came to her. Out there in the open woods, in the temple of God's own building, away from the formalities of the elegant

home Church, there was to her heart an easier approach. Would she heed the heavenly message, as she heard it that day?

The sermon was such a one as those good country people seldom heard. And they received it, the whole crowded tent of them, with all the ardor of rural folk. And if the great hardy oaks above them had a voice, they would, to this day, declare the breadth of vision vouchsafed to many of them that morning.

As soon as the sermon was finished, and before the announcements for the afternoon were made, Alice, not waiting for the other three of the little company, sped to her aunt's tent. Just then a calm, but earnest woman, who had been entertaining the children out under the trees, stepping in quietly beside the platform, handed the pastor of Willowdale Church a notice, which he read.

The service having closed, Mrs. Edgecomb and the girls sat down under a tree near their tent, and ate their lunch. No mention was made of the morning sermon. They talked of the trees, the birds, the flowers, and the crops, in their usual happy vein. But the sympathetic eyes of Lucile could see the shadow across the face of her friend. Alice would not have known that she saw it, however. Lunch over, they either strolled through the grove, or rested on the edge of the ravine. But when the hour had come for the afternoon service, they turned toward the big tent.

"I shall not go in there, now," said Alice.

"And why not?"

"I have heard one missionary sermon. That is enough for to-day. I will be in at the Mothers' Meet-

ing. I know that will be good. They surely will not make a missionary meeting out of that. I may receive some good suggestions for the management of my Sunday-school boys. That is what concerns me now; not some theory for the enlightenment of the cannibals."

"You will surely come to the Mothers' Meeting?" asked Lucile.

"Yes, indeed, you will see me at sharp four o'clock."

And while Alice went to their own quarters, Lucile joined Mrs. Edgecomb and Lucy in the big tent.

"I wonder if you see what I do, Lucile?"

"What is it, Aunt Sarah?"

"I think that Alice has reached the conviction that missionary work is right, and that she ought to engage in it."

"I think so, too; but why does she resist?"

"I think she fears that she may have to give her life to the foreign field. She forgets that many of us are called to remain here, and keep up the work at this end of the world."

Soon they were listening to a stirring sermon by the young preacher from the neighboring town of Highland.

Meanwhile, Alice, in a very uncomfortable frame of mind, sat reading in her tent, until strains of music reached her; and she looked up to see the people before the rude altar, passing back and forth, shaking hands with each other, as, with shining faces, they sung, "When the roll is called up yonder, I 'll be there." She could not understand how they could be so happy while she was so miserable. The only dif-

ference was, that they had given to the Lord what she was refusing to give. Having put her book away, she sat listening to the exultant singing of that hymn. And she was really glad when the hour pointed to four, and she could again join her aunt and Lucile.

Then the matronly woman who had entered the tent near the close of the morning service, rose quietly before the people, and announced the opening hymn:

> "When I survey the wondrous cross
> On which the Prince of glory died."

"Who is that woman?" whispered Alice to her aunt.

"She is visiting one of the ladies of this place, and is a stranger to me; though I understand that she comes from a neighboring city. I am sure she will have something good to say."

The Scripture reading and the opening prayer ended, the leader announced the subject: "What if you had never heard the name of Jesus?"

"Why, I thought that this was a Mothers' Meeting," again whispered Alice. "That does not sound much like it."

"We shall see," said her aunt.

"What if you had never heard the name of Jesus?" said the speaker. And the color came to her cheeks as she went on: "What if you did not know that a Savior had died for you? What if none of your friends or neighbors knew? What if no one in this town, and no one in all the towns about here, and no one in all this country, had heard the blessed news? What if you mothers were taught that you had no souls, and were

considered a little lower than the cow, and only worthy to be the slaves of your husbands and sons? What if, when God should send a beautiful little daughter into your home, whom you tenderly loved, you were to be hated by your husband because it was not a son? Suppose, as she grew, and you loved her more and more, you were compelled, when she was six years of age, to give her in marriage to a husband, and send her to be a slave in the home of her mother-in-law? And that husband to whom you had given your daughter—your delicate, little, golden-haired daughter—and whom she had never seen till the day of her marriage, might be the vilest wretch; or he might come with reason dethroned, an idiot, and he could claim your daughter soul and body; for, with no ray from the eternal Christ in this land, upon your precious daughters would rest the heaviest woes."

And, as the speaker paused a moment, the faces of her listeners were turned toward her with looks of pity and distress.

"Suppose," she continued, "when death had taken from you the husband of your youth, you were to be abused by those who should have stood by you. Suppose you were to be pounced upon, your clothing torn, your hair pulled, and you yourself dragged through the dusty road to the river and back again through the dust, until there was scarcely breath of life left in you?

"If all these conditions were true to-day, and some few from among the indifferent ones over the seas were to come and sit down beside you mothers, and tell you

that you had souls, and tell you that there was a great and good Being who loved woman as well as man, and would save her, would you not be glad?"

And, in the faces of her hearers, she thought she plainly read her answer.

"But these conditions do not surround you. You have heard the glorious news; and your friends and neighbors and townspeople and countrymen have heard. And, because of the influence of the blessed Christ, you mothers reign as queens in your homes; you occupy the throne of honor and power before all men.

"There are women, however, of whom all these dark conditions are true. There are women—two-thirds of all the women in the world—who never heard the name of Jesus. There are women—three hundred millions of them—who think they have no souls, and that their only hope of salvation lies in the fact that, some time, after being born again and again into the world as reptiles and beasts, they may at last appear as men, and, having souls, may be saved. And they are glad when some of us go over there, and tell them there is a better way.

"Let us help them. In these Mothers' Meetings we have been praying for ourselves and our children; and that is right. We have been trying, by all the power that God has given us, to lead the souls of this community into the kingdom. Let us not, friends, forget those hungry, perishing men and women over there in the night, who are pleading with you and me to give them the Bread of Life. And, as we have received abundant help ourselves, let us pour out our

hearts this afternoon in their behalf. And, sending out our love and sympathy and benefactions to all the world, may we not expect unusual returns? 'Blessed are ye'—the Lord hath said it by his prophet—'blessed are ye that sow beside all waters.' "

And the prayers that followed were full of power. Then the speaker announced one verse of the hymn, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus," adding, "When we have sung this, let us see how many will 'stand up for Jesus' in this form of work. Let each one tell how she feels about it, and in what relation to it she holds her money and her children." And the response was marvelous. Such a spirit of consecration as those mothers, and some of those fathers, manifested is seldom witnessed.

One woman said: "If I had been taught what young people are now taught, I would not be in America to-day."

Another who, having come from away down in the country, had never given much thought to missionary work, one would suppose, said she would be willing to give her son.

A good "mother in Israel" rose, and, with beaming face, said: "Would that God would call my daughter Florence!"

Another, from among the singers, spoke with trembling voice: "I have always been very much interested in this work. I have daughters; but I think it would be pretty hard for me to give them up. If the Lord should call them, I trust I should be ready." So hard is it for even the best of us to part with our dearest for the Lord's sake.

Then a young mother, with a babe in her arms, arose: "I will give my little baby to mission work, if the Lord wants her, and her brother too, if it is His will." And those who had seen the earnest little woman wheeling her two babes about the grove felt that she meant what she said.

Another woman arose, and with great difficulty spoke: "As we sung 'Leaning on Jesus' just now, I tried to picture what it would be to have no arm to lean on; to be only a slave to my husband and sons; to be hated because of my daughters; and, in the hour of my widowhood, to be turned out like a dog by those who should have comforted me; to be kicked and beaten and starved—and have no arm to lean on. O, the thought that there are such women in the world! But we can help them." And, then, the cry of those despairing millions surged through her soul, and for one moment she stood silent. Then she continued: "I wonder what the Lord wants us to do about this? I wonder what sacrifices he expects us to make? We have money, some of us. Some of us have not much. But we have time and influence, and we have children. I feel like saying, 'Here, Lord, take whatever will help to quiet this awful cry of the lost, whatever will calm the troubled heart of woman in her prison-house.' "

Then a father arose and, with real effect, told of the time when, at a convention in the city, he had dedicated his wee babe, Earl, to this cause, and how he went home and told his wife, and she was glad that he had done it. Then he added: "When the little fellow was four years old, he met with an accident in this very

town, and in a few days he was taken away. We could not understand the mystery; but," said he, with emotion, "if the Lord wants any of our children, they are his." And tears came to the eyes of many who a year before had wept with the good man and his wife as they bore away to the little narrow house the remains of their gentle boy.

Soon, after an earnest concert of the Lord's Prayer, the meeting closed. And the emphatic petition upon the lips and in the hearts of that audience was, "Thy kingdom come!"

The sun had dipped behind the town that night, when Mrs. Edgecomb's carriage turned from the grove out upon the homeward road. That was a quiet ride; for Lucile found companionship in sky and landscape, and Alice was too much absorbed with her own perplexing thoughts to be sociable.

When, however, they sat, as the night before, on Aunt Sarah's porch, she forced herself to be agreeable. Nevertheless, the cloud still overshadowed her.

"Last night Aunt Sarah made a proposition; now I will make one," said she, forcing herself into animation.

"Let us hear it," said Mrs. Edgecomb.

"Lucile says that you want her to spend the summer, and that she has consented to, at least, prolong her visit. I think that I ought to go home to-morrow."

"Why, you have not been here two weeks."

"No, but I really ought to be home, to teach my Sunday-school class."

"But you arranged with your mother to teach the boys one Sunday," said Lucile.

"Yes, but it would be better for me to be regular."

And she went, ostensibly from love of her Sunday-school class, but really from fear of staying longer, where she seemed haunted by some stern spirit, to yield to which, she thought, would cost her dearer than life.

Chapter IV

By Proxy

While Mrs. Edgecomb's carriage was rolling easily along the country highway, after the day at Willowdale, a handsome vehicle and team in the city turned quickly from the avenue toward the South-side. Presently, Ward Hetherington stopped at the boarding-place of Mr. Thomas.

"Well, good evening, Mr. Hetherington; do come in. You surely are here to stay this time."

"On the contrary, I can scarcely wait to deliver my message. I ought to be over at the church this minute. Could you secure an audience at the hall for Dr. Powers, of India, to-morrow night?"

"Dr. Powers? Who knew he was in this part of the country? Yes, we will have an audience, if I have to walk the streets all day to-morrow to obtain one. But how comes he here at this time?"

"He arrived from Willowdale on the evening train. He is on his way west, and intended to leave to-night after speaking at St. Paul's; but I begged so hard for a night at the mission, that he consented to stay over. But I must go," as he ran down the steps. "I will see you to-morrow night."

To-morrow night came, and, thanks to the energy of young Thomas, a crowded hall greeted the doctor. And for one hour he held the people, as he told of the great work done in India by native preachers among

the lower castes. And he showed them how they might work for the Lord twenty-four hours in a day.

"For thirty dollars," said he, "you can keep a native pastor-teacher at work among the people one year. As often as I could, since reaching America, I have stood at night and watched the sun drop into the west, and have thought that my wife and child in Calcutta were looking from their eastern windows upon that same sun as he rose over India. And I knew that our preachers over there were taking up the work just as I laid it down. So, if you want to put two days' work into one, as you Americans sometimes try to do, you can support a pastor-teacher in India, who will represent you there, and work while you sleep."

Ward had already pledged the night before the support of five of these native workers. But this evening, in order to encourage the struggling mission, he pledged the support of another. Two other like pledges were made, one of them by Thomas himself.

At the close of the service, friends were given an opportunity to meet the doctor. Among them was a woman past middle life, with black hair, dark eyes, and a strong, motherly face; Mrs. Chandler was her name. And with her were a son and daughter, the latter, our friend Grace. They had been active members of St. Paul's; but Mrs. Chandler had taken the little mission to her heart, and evidently it would not be long before her membership would be transferred from the mother Church to its young daughter. She was deeply absorbed in what the doctor said, and being of moderate means, wished with all her heart that she had millions to give, not thinking, apparently, that she had in her

hands a gift more precious than countless millions, that the Lord might use, and yet a gift that she would not have given.

"Doctor, this has been good for us," said Mr. Thomas, as they were leaving the hall; "but I wish we could have done more for your work."

That good man looked straight into the honest face of the young preacher. "I rather think," said he, "that I have found more for our work in India here to-night than just now appears," as, with a wave of the hand, he stepped into Ward's carriage and rode away.

Mr. Thomas staggered. What did he mean? Did he want him for that far-off land? Such a thought had scarcely occurred to him. His hands and heart were full with mission work in a large city; and while world-wide evangelization was very near to him, he had somehow felt that he could do more for the conversion of the world by working in the home field. There was so much to be done right here. And in that extraordinary moment, physically strong and mentally equipped though he was, he tried to convince himself that some natural disability or some defect of training would make him an unfit subject for work in a distant and difficult field. And yet his logic was not all-convincing. While he stood there alone in the darkness of the summer night, he felt himself suddenly letting go of everything. Like a man adrift on an unfriendly sea, he felt lost.

But, then, as he walked toward his boarding-place, he reflected that, improbable as it seemed, the doctor might not have referred to him at all. At any rate, which was a wise reflection, he did not have to decide

the question now, even if he must do so later. And he went to rest with a calm spirit.

The next morning Mrs. Claymore's carriage stopped at Mrs. Chandler's door.

"I hope you will forgive me," said the stately yet charming Mrs. Claymore, "for coming at so unseasonable an hour."

Once Mrs. Chandler would have trembled to offer that lady a seat in her parlor; but she had long since learned, as did all others who knew her well, that beneath the outward elegance and stateliness was a heart as warm and true as ever beat. And so it was that she welcomed her with pleasure that morning into her home.

"I suppose you know why I have come? It is early to be collecting dues; but I was out here, visiting a sick friend, and I thought I would stop. Then I see you so seldom, now that you are wedded to the South-side Mission, this might be my only opportunity of securing your dollar."

"You can have my dollar, but not my daughter," as she gave the money to Mrs. Claymore.

"Would you not be willing to give your daughter?"

"Would you be willing to give your daughter?" pointedly, to the astonished Mrs. Claymore.

"I hope I should," doubtfully, as the mother heart turned toward Alice, as she supposed, away in the country.

"I might hope I should," returned Mrs. Chandler, with emphasis, clearly meaning that she never could give up her darling Grace. Mother was seldom more wrapt in a daughter than she in hers; and she simply

would not give a moment's thought to parting with her.

"I have always felt," continued she, "that I would gladly give one of my sons, if he were prepared and willing to go. There would be some satisfaction in feeling that I had a child in that good work; but my one ewe lamb I never could give."

And Mrs. Claymore had nothing to say; for her own experience did not fall far short of that.

One more missionary call, late in the afternoon, she made, as she turned up the avenue after several hours at the Children's Home. This was at the pretentious quarters of Mrs. St. James.

"My dear Mrs. Claymore, I am so delighted!" said the patronizing Mrs. St. James. "I have not seen you in several weeks."

"No," said Mrs. Claymore; "and I suppose you would not have seen me at this late hour in the afternoon, had it not been for your dues. I feared I should not see you in time for the last quarter's remittance, so I called in passing."

The lady's countenance fell at once. "But, really, Mrs. Claymore, I can not spare the dollar. You know under what expense we are just now, in view of Isabella's wedding. Of course, if she were not to marry a Duke," with manifest pride on account of her daughter's distinction, "her wardrobe would not need to be so elaborate. It really will take every dollar we can spare."

"But if talented young women are willing to leave home and everything that is dear to them in this land, for the sake of the unsaved women of heathen-

dom, and represent us there, we can do no less than pay them their meager support," warming to her subject a little in presence of this proudly indifferent woman.

"The girls ought to have better sense than to go to those forlorn countries. I am inclined to think that they ought to be deprived of a little for their rashness. I would rather my daughter would be in her coffin than to throw her life so recklessly away."

"Most mothers have to part with their daughters sooner or later."

"O, it is not the parting with our daughters that is so hard. But to have a girl bury herself where the world never hears of her, is rather humiliating to an ambitious mother."

"You must know, Mrs. St. James, that a part of the world is on the other side of the globe; and while our missionary girls may not be known to a large circle of friends here, they are enshrined in hundreds, and even thousands, of grateful hearts over the seas. Hard as it must be for a mother to part with a daughter for that work, she need not feel that that daughter is buried."

Mrs. Claymore was astonished at her own boldness; for she had not been the most enthusiastic, herself. But the selfishness of this worldly woman had caused her unusual vehemence. And, for the moment, she even felt that she could let her own Alice go. She certainly would let her go rather than give her in marriage to one like the Duke of Mansfield, whose only pledge to worth was his title and his money, and the products of whose brains were so mediocre that

they only circulated by his rank. The sensitive Mrs. Claymore would have spurned such alliance for her daughter. But to the high-spirited Mrs. St. James it was very gratifying.

Later, as she rode toward her home, she pondered the two calls she had made. One affectionate, devoted, most excellent woman, from love for her daughter, would not give her to missionary work; for it would be like taking her very heart to part with her. Another, haughty, cold, self-indulgent woman, from pride for her daughter, would not give her; for it would blight her worldly ambitions. And so, thought Mrs. Claymore, the devoted mothers and the selfish mothers, alike, refuse to give their daughters to this important work. She had never before so realized the difficulties in the way.

"O, that Alice Claymore is the most stupid girl I ever saw!" said Isabella, as her mother closed the door behind her guest. "I have no patience with her. I do not believe she has a particle of ambition. She is so provokingly indifferent. Much as I dislike to say it, I think she might now be in my place. There is no denying that she is very popular. And that night, at Mrs. Galbraith's, she completely captivated the Duke by her saucy indifference. But she did not seem to have the sense to see it; for she paid him no more respect than if he were the son of an old moss-back. I was exasperated with her, and I did not feel altogether amiable toward the Duke, for his fickleness. But I did not dare show it."

"Yes, Alice does lack the force of an ambitious girl. I am only glad that you have better judgment."

"The insipid life that she must lead! An occasional evening at cards with her cousin Charles, or at church with that sober Ward Hetherington, or at home with her mother! Now that she has left college, that little round of occupations will, doubtless, fill her time. I certainly pity her."

It so happened, that, at that very moment, Alice Claymore was concerned with weightier problems than ever crossed the narrow horizon of Isabella St. James. Upon arriving home from Willowdale that morning, she had found her mother away, and had spent the day with Mrs. Galbraith, returning just before Mrs. Claymore drove back from Mrs. St. James's. She had, however, skillfully avoided disclosing to Mrs. Galbraith the real secret of her flight from Aunt Sarah's. That good woman thought strange that she should have cut short her stay in the country, but commended her for her devotion to her Sunday-school boys. Surprised, indeed, was Mrs. Claymore, upon entering the house, to find herself in her daughter's arms.

"Why, what brought you home?"

"O, I was homesick."

"You foolish girl! Where is Lucile?"

"She is at Aunt Sarah's."

"And you ran away and left her?"

"But she will likely stay all summer; and I could see no need of my staying two weeks, when I felt like coming home at the end of one."

"You do not know, dear, how glad I am to see you, after all," said her mother cordially; "for the house takes on too solemn an air the minute you step out. I shall be so glad when your brother is back

from Europe. But, then, he will be teaching, and we shall not have him much to ourselves. Really, I went away from home to-day to escape the unutterable loneliness that continually oppressed me. I was dreading the evening; for your father will be at the store late. But this happy surprise has removed my anxiety."

The dinner over, and Mr. Claymore having returned to the store, Mrs. Claymore said to her daughter: "Excuse me, just a little, Alice; I have some preparation to make for to-morrow. I will be in soon."

"Let me help you, mother."

"Thank you, dear, it is so little that I have to do that you could scarcely help me."

So, while Alice awaited her mother's return, she sunk into a luxurious rocker that stood invitingly in the bay-window. "O, this does seem good," thought she, as she settled between its comfortable arms for a little rest. "There is nothing like my own easy chair, after all."

"And yet," said a voice, "you refuse to give one cent to those millions of weary women who, deprived of even the rudest chairs, sit upon mere mats on their bare, dirt floors."

"What!" thought she, as she sprung to her feet, "am I to be continually haunted by this phantom?" And she dropped among the soft pillows on the lounge.

As she lay reclining there, with eyes closed, that voice whispered: "Cold brick beds are the only rest for many of thy tired sisters."

"O, I simply can not live this way!" And she

arose, and, sitting down at the piano, she poured forth soulful strains that had been her panacea in time of tempest.

"There are thousands of girls in heathen darkness, waiting for just such training as this," came the voice.

"What of it?" cried Alice, half aloud. "I do not know that their condition need disturb me. My misery certainly makes them no less miserable."

And in her helplessness she fled to a favorite refuge under the drooping elms upon the lawn. Just then the setting sun, before he hid his face behind the hills, shot one last message to her heart: "During the hours of your peaceful sleep, I shall be beating my merciless beams down upon peoples perishing for the kind of help that you might give."

And in the fruitless attempt to close her heart to the pleading of that piteous voice the poor girl buried her face in her hands. Thus she remained until she heard her mother enter the parlor, and knew that she was waiting. Then she arose and went to her, longing to throw herself into her arms and unburden her own heart, but unwilling, yet, to yield. The sympathetic mother had detected, from the first, an unwonted cloud upon her daughter's face.

"What have you been reading while I was in the country?" asked Alice. "Have you finished the 'Tale of Two Cities?' "

"No, not the present reading. You know that I have read it several times."

"It is a book that one can read once a year," observed Alice. "I wish you would read from it now, if you like, and I will listen."

Then she wheeled out a low stool, and, as she sat lovingly thereon at her mother's feet, that gentle voice whispered yet again: "Multitudes of your helpless sisters, this very moment, are serving as base slaves at the feet of cruel mothers-in-law."

And as Mrs. Claymore read of the lonely Sydney Carton's midnight walk in the streets of Paris, beside the eddying river, and the comfort and strength that were his as there flashed upon his thought, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," there dawned upon this troubled girl's mind what she had never seen before in her reading of Sydney Carton's heroic struggle. She saw that the "Resurrection and the Life" was the heritage of all mankind. Still she was unwilling to admit that she could do anything to carry that "Resurrection" and that "Life" to dying souls beyond the seas.

At length, in utter helplessness and in despair of finding rest, she bade her mother good-night, and went to her own room. She determined to retire at once, hoping that sleep would bring relief. Just before turning out the light she opened the Bible for her evening devotions. She read, as the Book opened, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." She could read no more, and, closing the book, she fell upon her knees. As she tried to pray, before her appeared to stand the risen Lord, and to her heart he seemed to say: "Two-thirds of all the women in the world never heard my name; and while thou dost accept so freely this privilege of calling upon me, there are hundreds of millions of women for whom my blood was just as freely

shed, and whom I as dearly love, waiting, longing to be told of the provisions of my grace. And thou, my child, art holding from them this precious truth."

"O, Christ! O, Christ!" she cried, imploring, "I can hold out no more against the pleading of thy gentle voice. Show me again thy favor. Take me, use me any way, send me anywhere; only let thy face again shine upon me. Anything but this dreadful unrest! To Central China send me, to be slain by the mob; or to Southern India, to perish by the heat—anywhere, to do thy will!"

And there came into her heart such peace and rest as she had never known. What she had looked upon as beyond endurance, now appeared the easiest service of love. What she had thought would impose upon her the life of an ascetic, now stood out before her as a life laden with opportunities—a life so rich in privilege that from that moment there was no more room for many of those pastimes that she had thought necessary to brighten existence. She found her life, her light, her abounding joy, that night, when she ceased battling with conscience. How small a service seemed it, then, to even die in a far-away land for the One who had given himself for the world! And yet there abode with her the conviction that her help was needed just now in the home field, to supply the means to put native converts to work. What the Lord wanted of her, as he wants of all his children, was not that she should go to China, but that she should yield her will. And when she did that, she was not troubled about where she should go.

Chapter V

Transition

The snows of winter are falling. The hurrying months have rolled varied experiences upon the pathway of our friends.

Ward Hetherington had taken his mother for a much-needed rest to the East, and, finally, across the waters, where they had traveled somewhat leisurely through a few of the cities of Europe. His return home was delayed by the interests of the dry-goods house, which kept him in New York until after the holidays.

Alice and her mother, since the struggle of that summer night, had become more than ever indispensable to each other. When the daughter had yielded herself, and the mother had yielded her daughter, it seemed, in some inexplicable way, that they belonged the one to the other as never before. Immediately after the night referred to, Alice had given her name to Mrs. Galbraith as a member of the Missionary Society. And soon thereafter she was elected corresponding secretary, a position which she filled most acceptably. Thus the cause against which she had before fought she now warmly espoused.

Isabella St. James, after a gorgeous wedding, was now the proud Duchess of Mansfield; and, gracing a foreign castle with becoming dignity, satisfied the pride of her ambitious mother.

Mr. Thomas, the still prosperous pastor at the South-side, when he sat in his study of an evening, ever and anon lifted a loving face to a pair of black eyes at the opposite side of his table. Though he said little to her that night at the reception over a year ago, yet there was something in the charming sprightliness of Viola Gravelly that answered to his own soul's desire. And thus early in his ministry his life was sweetened and strengthened by the love of one true woman.

Mrs. Chandler had been busy all the fall putting her needle in and out as she wove love-threads into her daughter's trousseau. Often tears fell upon her work as she pictured the desolation of the home with Grace gone. And Grace would say, "O, mamma, don't cry! For you wouldn't like to have me never marry."

"Why, no; I want you to marry sometime. That is all right. But there is no hurry about it."

Yet Grace and Mr. George did not see it that way; and one November night wedding-bells rang out their nuptials, bringing a bright and joyous daughter into a family where, heretofore, there had been none, and leaving one home so empty that the bereaved mother could scarcely become reconciled.

Lucile Fenton, after the summer at Mrs. Edgecomb's, had returned at the time of falling leaves to the city. The country sun and air and food had given a faint color to her cheeks; and, at first sight of her, friends took hope. But the autumn frosts fell, and the beautiful girl again began to droop.

"O, how lovely!" cried Lucile, as she lifted her

hand from the pillow to take the beautiful bouquet of roses that Alice had just brought. For the rose was Lucile's favorite flower; and, during these days, Alice never failed to keep a fresh bouquet on the mantel.

"Alice, dear," said Lucile, looking longingly into her friend's face, "you will comfort mother, won't you? You will come to see her often?"

Alice could scarcely speak. "Yes, dear, of course I will. But, Lucile, how is it that you must go?"

"We can not now tell why; we only know that He makes no mistakes. And, Alice, I go so peacefully, when I think about you. You can do so much that I never could have done. And mother—my poor, darling mother—I know that she will do, when I am gone, what she never could do were I to remain. It is better so, Alice."

Alice soon left, to come again the next morning, and the next, and—

Hush, step softly! a soul is passing. Guardian angels convey it hence. Quietly, now—draw the curtain. Yes, we know the beautiful sleeper. In the few months of our acquaintance, we have learned to love her dearly. Rest, gentle one; for God hath taken thee!

If you could have parted the curtain a few hours before, you would have heard tender words spoken.

"O, mother darling, do not weep. I am only going home. But, if you can bear it, I want to say something before I go." A gentle pressure of her daughter's hand told her to go on. "If I were to stay here, you would gladly keep on paying out hun-

dreds of dollars every year for my comfort and happiness. When I am gone, will you not continue to spend the same amount for me? And it may be thus I shall do more than I could have done by staying here. That money, I wish might go where I have so longed to go—to the poor, secluded women of India. Will you do that, mother?"

The heart-broken mother could not answer a word. But she pressed the thin, white hand to her lips, and Lucile understood.

"I knew you would, my precious mother." And she stopped to rest; for the effort had wearied her.

Then she spoke faintly: "Good-bye, my dear father—good-bye, little sister—good-bye, darling mother." And then, more faintly, as though she spoke from the other world, a heavenly radiance the while shining through her transparent face: "Oh—there—they are—the women—throngs of—them—the women of—India—and—and they are—singing—the song of—the—Lamb—and—Oh—they are—beckoning to—me. Yes—I—am coming."

Then a stillness, only broken by the muffled stroke of the clock on her mantel, as it tolled the holy hour of midnight; and as the last faint echo died away, those who stood by her bed caught, as from afar, the words, "Lord, take me." And she entered "in through the gates into the city."

The heart of St. Paul's was strangely touched that day when they bore to its resting-place the form of the lovely Lucile. And now the early snows mantle her grave.

That day, after the dreary ride from the place of

burial, one woman entered her home with a heavy heart—entered, to find it for the first time void and empty. O, how changed was everything! Before, she had prided herself on its perfect appointments—the carpets, the curtains, the portières, the paintings, the linen, the gold and silver ware, the glass and china,—all selected with great care and regardless of cost, all very satisfying, indeed, to a cultivated taste; scarcely a piece but what was put in its place to gratify a worldly ambition. The whole elaborate array mocked her that weary afternoon. Nor was it so much the beautiful furnishing of her home that smote her as the thought of her own selfish disregard of the great opportunities that had continually pleaded for recognition. She had spurned them all.

Not only had she herself spurned them, but she had refused to let her daughter ally herself with the forces that work for the redemption of the world. She recalled, that afternoon, how, once, when Lucile was a mere girl, she had said that she meant to be a missionary; and how she herself had then forbidden her going any more to the children's meetings, lest she should grow up to carry out her intention; and how she had studiously avoided placing any missionary literature upon her table, lest her daughter's early impressions should be deepened into a call to that holy work; and how she once had spitefully said to Mrs. Galbraith, "Do n't call me a missionary woman!" For, though she might have paid the little sum necessary to constitute her a member of the society, she carefully avoided any alliance therewith, in her determination to hush that still voice in her daughter's

soul. All these opportunities she had evaded, that she might keep her daughter; and now, where was she? God had taken her! Not a material want of her household had been denied. But what had she left? A most elegant and beautiful home, with the soul of it gone. She gazed regretfully from one object to another, vainly hoping to find some comfort; but there was none.

At length, she fled to Lucile's room. So like her it looked that she almost listened for her to speak. Handsomely furnished it was, like the rest of the house; but, lo! here were tokens of a love that went beyond its four walls. On the mantel were two tiny shoes that once had been worn by a woman in China—shoes that Lucile had purchased for the purpose of adding a little to the fund that should relieve just such women as the one who had worn them. From her books upon the table hung delicately-embroidered silk marks—the work of a Japanese youth. And the proceeds from the sale of the bookmarks had gone to help build a Christian school in Sendai. On a little tray were a few "cowrie" pins, the remnant of a supply that she had purchased of a missionary from India. And a little gift had thus been sent across the waters to cheer some waiting heart in that weary peninsula. Ah, yes; and there was her mite-box. How much self-denial, I wonder, could that have revealed! Then Mrs. Fenton opened a little drawer, where Lucile had told her that she would find what money she had left. Two pocket-books lay side by side. One marked "The Lord's Tenth" the mother opened. One hundred and seventeen dollars she

counted. "Poor child," thought Mrs. Fenton, "she was too sick at last to spend her money; but she did not forget to put it here." Then, opening the other pocket-book, the one in which Lucile had kept her own spending-money, she counted a dollar and a few cents. She took the small amount and laid it reverently with the larger sum, saying to herself: "Let it all go that way."

Then, scarcely knowing what she did, she crossed the room, and sunk into a chair that stood in the east window. From a handsome vase that stood on the dresser at her left, the scent of white roses reached her. They were placed there by Alice the day before Lucile died. Like a breath of June their sweet fragrance seemed, strayed into December. On the mantel at the right the clock was still ticking away the hours, while through a window at the south a narrow sunbeam from the fast descending sun wedged its way into a corner of the room.

A long time she sat as one in a dream. Then, half unconsciously, she took from the table Lucile's Bible. It lay open there as she had left it the last time she read from its sacred page. The mother's eye fell on a passage marked by her daughter's own hand—possibly, the last one she had read. And now the mother read: "What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." And, while she was pondering what that might mean, a little brush of her sleeve turning the leaves of the book, as if by accident, opened before her another carefully marked passage: "Feed my sheep." And, closing her eyes, she heard a far-away cry: "We are the lost sheep."

Then she knew that the injunction was but the loving command to her of the Lord himself concerning the lost and wandering of his flock; and that what he had done, though she knew not fully then, nor ever would know till hereafter, yet was to teach her that she was to help feed his sheep.

Unseen by Mrs. Fenton, her little golden-haired Mildred had crept softly into the room and now stood with troubled face before her mother.

"O, are you here, darling?" And, laying the book in the window, she took the little girl lovingly in her arms. And, looking into the wistful blue eyes lifted to hers, she vowed never again to put a stumbling-block in the way of one of her children.

As the December shadows fell about her, somehow—so surely do these transitions crowd into the life and heart deeper convictions and holier ambitions—a light from the Eternal filled her soul, and underneath she felt the Everlasting Arms. In her religion there proved a reality that she never thought it possessed.

And when, several months later, the ladies of St. Paul's Church opened their thank-offering envelopes, there was one whose owner had never contributed the like before, which contained a large sum. And with it was this note: "Given by one who, in passing 'through the waters,' has been stayed by the Holy One of Israel."

Chapter VI

The Hand of Providence

"O, VIOLA," said Mr. Thomas one winter day as he burst into the kitchen, "I met Mr. Hetherington this morning, and asked him here to supper. He is just home from his long trip, and I want you to know him better."

"That will be delightful," said she. And while she sat thinking about the necessary preparations, he dashed away.

At the usual hour the little table was spread, and the two, with their guest, sat down to a simple but very palatable meal.

"You know how to prepare chocolate, Mrs. Thomas," said Ward, tasting the delicious hot drink. "I like it, but seldom have it when away from home. When I do have it, it is so rich that I can scarcely drink it."

"Thank you. Will you have a gem?" as she passed a plate of those round Graham concoctions, such as she used to make back on the farm.

"Just what I like again," said he. "By the way," turning to Mr. Thomas, "you enjoy this way of living better than at Mrs. Smith's boarding-house?"

"O, it makes me lonely to think of that!" with a loving look to the one opposite.

Albeit the appointments of the little parsonage were so simple in contrast with the elegance of his mother's

home, yet Ward Hetherington felt himself within royal presence. For where love is enthroned, all within its influence takes on beauty and grandeur. And so the little, narrow rooms that night seemed to him to melt away into palace halls, and these two people to grace them with regal dignity.

At length, he arose to go. "This evening has been a feast to me," said he. Then to Mrs. Thomas: "Do come over and see mother. I know you two would be companionable. Good-night."

Mr. Thomas walked with him to the car. And Viola, eagerly awaiting his return, met her husband at the door.

"O, that was a lovely supper," said he; "and you looked so sweet," as he folded his arms about her.

"That is what you always say," she said, gratefully; "and that is why I like to have people come." And they sat down together before the bright fire in their cozy parlor.

"Viola, you have not seen the afternoon mail. A letter came from Dr. Powers. I did not show it to you at the time, for you were too busy. I waited to have a quiet hour with you before even speaking of it." And he drew the letter from his pocket. She put her hand in his, for she felt what was coming. He read the letter, which was, as Viola thought it would be, an urgent request that Mr. Thomas consider the proposition of offering himself as a missionary for India. As he read, he felt his wife's hand tremble in his.

"What will you answer him?" she said when he had finished the letter.

"What ought I to answer, dear?"

"I know how I feel, but it may not be right."

"Well?"

"I think"—and hers was a very natural conclusion—"that we need not look beyond our present work for opportunity."

"That is just the way I think," said Mr. Thomas, somewhat reassured. "I feel no personal call to labor in India; and that being the case, I think we should rest content with the work in our hands."

Then a letter to the doctor to that effect put an end, for the time, to further correspondence upon the subject.

Ward reached home that night to find his mother sitting alone before the open grate in the library, reading the evening paper; and drawing his chair beside her, they fell to talking.

"How are the young preacher and his wife?"

"Like two birds in a nest."

"I do not doubt it. I called there a few days ago, and I was delighted with Mrs. Thomas."

"If we could look in upon them now, I suppose we should find them sitting in their little parlor, cooing like doves."

"That is all right!" said the mother.

"Of course it is all right," laughed Ward; and in his heart of hearts he wished that he might be with his dove. His? He scarcely had a right to think of her as his, and yet, somehow, he could not help it.

"What news in the paper to-night, mother?"

"I have just finished reading about those terrible massacres in China. I do not know when anything

has so distressed me. To think that some of our sweet girls that go out there to represent us may, even now, be subjected to the lawlessness of the mob! And we are powerless to help! I really believe that I suffer as being persecuted with them, they seem so like our very own. Talk about the 'romance of missions!' If I were seeking romance, I should choose some other occupation."

"Yes, indeed!" put in Ward. "The day is passed when intelligent people can talk about the 'romance of missions.' But say, do you know that Mr. Thomas is one of the finest men I ever met?"

"Yes," said his mother, "he certainly is a superior man. But how came you to speak of him in this connection?"

"I do not know that I ought to put it that way; but I fear that we will not have him many years in this country."

"Why so?" asked she in surprise.

"I think Dr. Powers has his eye on him for India."

"O, I hope not! We need just such an energetic young man right here in this city. Let him take a man that has not gained such a hold in the home field."

"There is the difficulty, mother. Untried men are not sought for the foreign work. Men that have proven themselves successful here are just the ones that are wanted there."

"Do you think he would go?"

"Possibly not. It may be that he feels no call to that work; then the doctor's wishes would have

little effect. I confess that I hope that to be the fact. For he is bound to develop into a man of power in foundation-work in our own cities."

So the two in the little parsonage at the Southside, and the two in the elegant mansion on the avenue, agreed that no one as well as the energetic young preacher himself could successfully work out the problems connected with local Church enterprise.

Farther up the avenue, that cold winter night, in another spacious house, two women sat in comfortable chairs, each occupied with her own writing; for when Alice and her mother happened to be alone of an evening, they chose, rather than sit apart by their respective desks, to draw the little table up before the grate and give to their writing an air of sociability.

"Have you nearly finished the letter to Miss Lawton? I am tired."

"No, I have not, mother. I have so much to write to these girls. Is it not strange that I was so long in awakening to the privileges of this work?"

"Not so strange, after all, when your mother was more than half asleep herself."

"I wish I could get all the young ladies to see this as I do. We girls that do not have to make our own living, and have money to spend freely, have no excuse for ignoring this cause. Of course, we are busy. Any energetic girl in these days is busy. But I am sure that we spend enough time and money on what counts for nothing, to relieve our Board of its present financial embarrassment."

"But it seems you can not force people to see it that way."

"That is true, as Ward discovered in his repeatedly futile exhortations to me. I wonder what he will think? We have not met since he returned; and I suppose he thinks me still the same unregenerate daughter of Eve that I was when last he labored with me on the subject that Sunday night in the summer. Perhaps now I shall be sufficiently pious to suit his taste." And she looked wistfully into the glowing embers.

Mrs. Claymore knew perfectly well what the noble Ward Hetherington would think of her lovely daughter. But she said nothing until Alice awoke from her reverie and resumed her writing.

Naturally enough, the next night Ward said to his mother: "If you will excuse me from home another evening, I will call at Mr. Claymore's." Then his eyes twinkled merrily as he spoke: "A little item of business demands my immediate attention."

"Certainly I will excuse you. 'Business before pleasure' always," with a knowing look at Ward.

"You are a good mother."

"And you are a good son," as she lifted her face for his good-bye kiss; for he had never outgrown that old-fashioned habit of leave-taking with her.

Shortly after, he touched the bell at the home of his partner.

Mrs. Claymore opened the door. "Good evening!" was Ward's cheery salutation.

Once Alice, in her schoolgirl way, would have bounded into the parlor at the sound of her friend's

She Looked Wistfully into the Glowing Embers

voice. But, somehow, that night a shyness, before unknown, crept over her; and she preferred to wait until she was called.

He was disappointed. He feared she was away. "Is Alice at home?" he asked.

"I will speak to her." And Alice came in. For the first time in her life she did not know what to say to him. And he was no less embarrassed. She managed to ask something about the health of his mother and add something about the pleasure of seeing him home again. But there was nothing in it at all like the Alice of six months back, until, with a sudden determination to say something, she asked: "O, have you heard the news?" The natural putting of that question broke his fetters.

"What news do you mean? I have heard considerable news within the last forty-eight hours. Tell me what it is, and I can answer your question."

"It is about me. Now, you may know it is nothing remarkable; for I never was noted for anything very magnanimous."

"O, but this cruel suspense! What under the light of the heavens have you been doing?"

"Why, I am corresponding secretary of our Missionary Society."

"You could not have told me better news," said he with evident pleasure.

"Now, I suppose you think that your prayers have been answered."

"Well, no; not that exactly. I have not considered you a fit subject for the prayers of the Church," he said, laughingly. "But, indeed, I am glad."

And who would not be glad to find the bond thus strengthened that bound him to a beautiful girl? For the next hour, conversation flowed untrammeled. It was a pleasure now to talk of the European trip. He gave charming descriptions of the cities and historic places that he had visited. He introduced Alice to many distinguished personages whom he had met. But he spoke most glowingly of the great pictures that he had studied; for in these he took peculiar interest.

Having spent a delightful evening, he returned home to find his mother, as usual, waiting for him before the library grate.

"Did you satisfactorily adjust that little business matter with Mr. Claymore?"

Ward laughed merrily. Then he told her all about the change in Alice which made her, to his mind, absolutely perfect, and, as he thought, absolutely his. Poor man! Had he known what was just ahead of him, he would be less sure of his prize. But the future being veiled, it seemed that night that his cup of joy was overflowing. And he drank freely.

It may not often happen, but in his case it did, that he had grown so naturally into the belief that Alice belonged to him that he had never pressed the question of her love, believing that he might, with propriety, at any time ask her to name the day of their marriage. Not being altogether ready, however, to assume the responsibilities of a home of his own, he preferred to postpone any definite plans, and simply enjoy her friendship as of old.

Saturday was a very busy day at the store, but O! such a happy day for Ward Hetherington!

Sunday morning dawned clear and cold. The sparkling snow beneath the hurrying feet of passers-by creaked sharply; and now and then, as gay drivers rode swiftly by, sleighbells tinkled merrily. The broad avenue at that hour was a scene of activity. Many people were on pleasure bent. Others were out for worship. A few, with hanging heads, and shame in their faces, belated with their Sunday breakfast by the previous night's dissipation, were stealing by side doors into open groceries and meat markets. Still others were on errands of mercy. But whatever led them forth that cold morning, all, as though in quest of speedy shelter, moved briskly along the street.

As Mr. and Mrs. Claymore, with their daughter, were hurrying up the stone steps to the church, Ward Hetherington came up the walk toward St. Paul's. He caught a glimpse of Alice. Her cheeks were deeply colored by the frosty air; her large blue eyes glistened, and her golden hair clustered in ringlets about her face. A rare picture of health and beauty she stood, as she paused to return Ward's morning salutation. Then they passed their separate ways into the church.

He had not been seated long before he discovered that behind him were two very chatty young ladies. Still he took no note of what they said.

"Would n't she make a lovely bride?" said one.

"I really believe that she is preparing to be a missionary," said the other.

"O yes, indeed; everybody thinks that. And then she is so unlike other girls. She does n't care at all for fashionable society," with evident disdain on account of the poor taste of the lady in question. And, glancing across the church to where Alice sat, she continued: "Her mother must regret it; for she most surely would grace any circle. She is charming."

"And yet Mrs. Claymore seems content," was the response.

"Ah, Alice Claymore, is it?" said Ward to himself. He did not know that he was listening until he heard the name; and then he remembered that they had said something about a missionary. Was that what the change in Alice meant? He tried to think not; yet, despite his efforts, it seemed very probable. And the next hour was occupied with a hopeless struggle to fix his thoughts upon the service. But the good pastor's message rolled away unheeded; for, although Ward fought the idea, he could not help thinking of Alice and her prospective career.

As quickly as possible after the benediction he made his way out of the church, and, hurrying home, went immediately to his own room. Once there, he threw himself on a small sofa near the fire, and, strong man that he was, he actually wept. His dream of yesterday was gone. He felt, too, that he was the cause of it all. If only he had never said anything to her about missionary work! And yet he so delighted in it himself that he wanted her to share it. Never had he once thought that she, any more than the other ladies of the Church, would go abroad.

He had been impressed with the need of workers who, remaining at home, should help to enlist the sympathies of the indifferent, and thus supply the funds necessary to utilize the forces already in the foreign fields. That had been his call. But evidently she had been led farther. And he thought he discovered that the society in whose success he had shown such interest had become his own rival.

As a Christian he supposed that long ago he had altogether given up his own will. But here was an unexpected difficulty; and so fixed was his heart in the desire for a home, with the one by his side whom he had loved since childhood, that he almost rebelled. To give her up, never to call her his own, was hard. But to let her go and be subject to hardships, persecution, and even massacre, and just now, too, when missionaries were in so great peril, was more than he could bear. The thought blinded him. Could he, could he let her go? He could go anywhere, or do anything himself, though he had never felt called to such work. But to sacrifice his beautiful Alice was altogether different. If only he could bear all the suffering without her exposure! The thought of her peril wrung his soul. His cup of sorrow was bitter! Till long after the sun went down he lay there upon his couch, a man crushed in spirit and utterly desolate.

At length he arose. One vow he had made, however; and that was not to breathe a word of his distress to Alice. He would not come between her and any chosen calling. Meanwhile he would wait. And, difficult as it was, he succeeded that evening in hid-

ing from her his feelings. So faithfully did he keep his vow that no one would have guessed the fierce struggle within. Yet he declined her invitation to stop after their walk from church. For he could not trust himself long in her presence.

Several days passed. Not yet had he told to any one his fears; but, his mother being his confidante he could not long hide from her his sorrow. Indeed she saw from the first that something was wrong and she was only waiting for him to tell his trouble So he sat down beside her one night in their favorite place before the library grate for advice.

"Am I doing right," he asked, after telling her his fears, "to say nothing to Alice?" And not waiting for an answer, "I hope it will not seem like indifference; for it most certainly is not that. It is nothing but my deep love for her that keeps me silent. If I loved her less, if I had in mind merely my own happiness, I surely should press my claim; but placing her happiness above everything, I can not bring myself to say a word. Is that right?"

"I have the utmost confidence in your sincerity, Ward. I certainly think that you are right. But I am aware that some people would not think so."

"I know that," said he. "Most people, I presume, would think me inhuman. I often have thought of what the chancellor said one morning in chapel with regard to Enoch Arden's death: that a man should look in upon his wife, happy in another's love, and go away and die without making himself known,—was more than human affection could endure. But I have read the story again and again with special

attention to that thought, and I can not agree with him. I admit that most men probably would not do as Enoch did. But they are selfish men, and not those that love strongly."

"You are one of the latter, my dear." And her approval and sympathy greatly strengthened him in his resolve.

Meanwhile Alice kept up her vigorous correspondence with workers in the Orient. She seemed indispensable to the home Church, though all the while its hold upon her seemed loosening.

Mrs. Galbraith, dear woman, said to her husband one day: "When I look into the face of Ward Hetherington, I feel that I must not have it so. Those two would do noble work for the foreign field here at home. I fear Alice will make a mistake if she goes."

"It can not be that you really think she will surely go," said Mr. Galbraith.

"She has not said so. She is not one that talks freely about her personal plans. But there is a general feeling among the ladies that her increased devotion means a yielding of herself to the work. Then, have you noticed Ward lately? His face has such a pathetic expression. I feel like crying when he smiles; he looks so sad. If he were to lose Alice, I think it would crush him. He is a man that will love once. He never could love another as he does her. She seems just suited to one of his disposition."

"But I think you women look at this too seriously. I judge that no girl would give up the man she loved for any such consideration."

"There you mistake, my dear," answered Mrs. Galbraith. "Do you remember Miss Bowman?"

"Yes."

"Well, she felt called to the work, but, somehow, the way seemed blocked, so that she thought she never should be able to go; and she consented to marry the man that she loved. Then the way opened to the mission field, and she felt compelled to go. It nearly crushed them both. But she went, and has been doing noble service ever since. I can not understand why a woman under such conditions should be asked for that work. But it seems that the world must be brought to Christ through any and all sacrifices. Sometimes we do absolutely have to give up everything, so urgent is the Lord's work, compared with even our fondest hopes. Yet I think it is very seldom that two hearts that love each other must be separated for Christ's sake. I only hope the separation will not be required of Ward and Alice."

About a week after that, Dr. Winthrow announced that the Local Union of the Woman's Missionary Society would hold its annual session in that church the next Thursday. Programs would be found in all the pews. Everybody was urged to take one, and all who could, to attend the meeting. Hurriedly scanning the items, Ward Hetherington stopped near the close of the evening session to read: "'Missionary Heroes,' Alice Claymore."

And Thursday night, taking a seat in the shadow of a pillar under the gallery, he nervously awaited the reading of that paper. Unobserved by him, more

than once during the evening, Mrs. Galbraith's motherly solicitude prompted her to look in the direction of his hiding-place. "Poor fellow!" she said to herself when Alice appeared. Her tall, handsome figure, coupled with the sincerely devout spirit in which she spoke, made her seem to Ward to be one of the subjects of her own paper, and every word she uttered went to his heart.

She quickly cited the names of Carey, Martyn, and Judson, Moffat, Livingstone, and others, and then continued: "They were missionary heroes who gave up their lives on the fever-haunted shores of Lake Nyassa. She was a missionary heroine who, having left her luxurious home in fair England, gave all her fortune and the best years of her life to work in Cairo. She is a heroine who, having refused the hand of the one most dear to her in her beloved America because the voice of God had spoken, now comforts and cares for the sick in far-away China."

"That surely means me," thought Ward, sadly.

"We think," continued the speaker, "of South America with its mineral wealth and lofty Andes, and we forget its priest-ridden people. We think of Ceylon with its luxuriant vegetation and 'spicy breezes,' and we forget its ruined daughters and desolate mothers. We think of India with its snow-capped Himalayas, its magnificent river systems, its Calcutta and Bombay, its graceful palms and magnolias; but our missionaries have experienced India with its low huts, its poverty and deep degradation."

"And that is what she will do," again thought the listener.

"They have sacrificed in ways that few of us can realize. They have forsaken home, friends, cherished institutions, native land, and Christian fellowship. Many have worked with means barely sufficient for their daily expenses, with the prospect of old age or broken health, and no provision for either. They have endured the scorching heat of tropical climes, and have suffered from fevers. They have gone where there were misery, want, filth, superstition, and idolatry. They have been persecuted, driven from their stations, imprisoned, almost starved. Some have even been slain. Many have been willing to go where no one else would go—to be devoured by the fierce cannibals of Central Africa, or to die of starvation on the distant islands of the Antarctic Sea. More than this: many have watched their little ones slowly wasting under the intense heat; and they have laid them away to rest in a far country, among a strange people. Mothers, with hearts as loving as the hearts of your mother and mine, have thus given their little ones, for whom they had tenderly cared, and concerning whom they had made large plans. And oftentimes, by their side, the father has been called to lay the mother, and to mourn the double loss of children and wife. Or the wife and mother has looked for the last time upon the face of her companion, and, with lonely, broken heart, has taken up the work as it fell from his hands. On the plains and on the hillsides; along the Congo and the Ganges; under the burning sands and the northern snows; and underneath the waters of the great deep, their dust lies, awaiting the resurrection morn."

And the listener heard no more; for he saw the flower of his love wither and die in the wastes of oriental heathenism. And he went to his home that night, feeling that he could almost say with the good man of old, "There is but a step between me and death;" for in the weakness of that hour—so prone are we to forget the Source of our strength—he felt that to live without Alice would be worse than death.

Chapter VII

Great Peace

In point of callers, it had been a "red-letter day" at the South-side parsonage.

As early as eight o'clock, the door-bell, all unconscious of the fact that the pastor had set apart that morning for the completion of his next Sunday's sermon, began its hospitable ringing; for, wisely or not, the pastor and his wife were always "at home" to any parishioners who needed their counsel; and, somehow, people had remarked that even the parsonage door-bell had a friendlier tone than was wont to respond at other homes in the parish.

"Is Mr. Thomas in?" asked the first caller, a very poor girl, ten years of age; but in spite of her poverty, she always wore a smile.

"Yes, Mr. Thomas is in," said his wife. "I will speak to him."

Mr. Thomas came down into the parlor. "Why, good morning, Maggie," said he.

"Here is that quarter that I subscribed last night."

"What, so soon?"

"Yes, sir. I did n't know last night where it was coming from. But this morning a lady gave me ten cents for taking care of her baby, and I sold a plant for fifteen cents; and here it is," handing him the money.

"Well, Maggie, if all the subscriptions come in

like that, it will not be long before we can build the new church."

When she had gone, the pastor returned to his study, only to be called back soon by the unexpected announcement of Frank Wilson.

The next to touch the friendly bell was Mrs. Oviatt. She was a little, quiet woman, about sixty years of age, and also very poor. She had been several times, already, to see the young pastor's wife; but so cheery was she always that not until that day had she revealed her trials to Mrs. Thomas. When she came in, she seemed so weary that she was prevailed upon to lie down for a rest upon the lounge. As she laid her head back on the pillow, she looked up gratefully into Mrs. Thomas's face.

"You don't know how good this seems," she said. "It is so quiet here, I can rest. Somehow, at our house there is always such a hubbub."

And yet that seemed natural; for she lived with her son, who had small children; and it was a relief to the old lady to be away from the noise.

"Don't let me keep you from your work," she continued. "Only please let me rest. I don't want to hinder you."

So Mrs. Thomas excused herself, to finish her early morning tasks. When she returned, her guest had fallen asleep; and she sat down near by to read the morning paper. Glancing up a little later, she found Mrs. Oviatt looking contentedly into her face.

"O," she said, "this is so good of you! I always feel that the Spirit of the Son of Peace abides here."

"Yes, Mrs. Oviatt, just as he abides with you, I suppose."

"But, Mrs. Thomas, I want to tell you something, if it will not be wrong for me to tell. I hope it won't, for I don't want to talk unkindly about any one, and I don't want to complain." Then she hesitated.

"Go on," said Mrs. Thomas. "I am sure you will say nothing wrong."

"My husband isn't a Christian, and his influence over the boys has made them just like him. I was young when I married him, and I didn't know what I was doing. I thought, just because he drove fine horses and dressed well, he was all right; and I didn't know altogether what he was until my oldest boy was large enough to go to Sunday-school. Then, when I would have the little fellow dressed sweet and clean in his new Sunday clothes, maybe his father would send him out to feed the pigs or water the horses,—anything to keep him home; and when he saw how determined I was to teach him to be a good boy, he would take him out among the carpenters and masons, and teach him to swear with the men."

And then she stopped, as if she feared she ought not to go farther.

"Tell me the rest, Mrs. Oviatt, if it will comfort you. I will not press you to tell what you would not; but I am always interested to hear what a friend wants to say."

"My poor boy! He was a beautiful little fellow, and so good! I sometimes wish he was where my

other two children are,—in their graves back in the East. But the good Lord knows about that."

"He knows about it all," comfortingly put in Mrs. Thomas.

"But what makes my heart ache so just now happened last Sunday. You know, I live with my boy Joe and his wife. My oldest boy, Sam, lives in the next block. I was coming home from church, feeling so happy and light-hearted after the good words Mr. Thomas said to us, and I met one of Joe's little girls.

" 'O, grandma,' said she, 'grandpa and Uncle Sam have been fighting, and they broke the looking-glass, and smashed the chairs. And grandpa shot at Uncle Sam.'

"I thought I never could get into the house and up the stairs to the bed. I almost dropped. And to-day 's the first time since then that I 've been able to walk over here. And so I just want to rest awhile, and then I 'll go back."

When she arose to go, Mrs. Thomas slipped a pair of new mittens onto her hands; for she had noticed how old and thin hers were.

"O, Mrs. Thomas, I can't take these from you."

"Yes, Mrs. Oviatt, to please me. I want you to have them. I want to give you something for friendship's sake. Take these with my love." And she kissed the thin cheek.

"Thank you, thank you, Mrs. Thomas," she said, her eyes filling with tears. "I never can repay you for all you have done for me; but it is all written down in the great Book."

When she was about to open the gate, before stepping out into the street, she turned to say again: "Now, I hope I have not done wrong in telling you this."

She went back to her cheerless home, a veritable lamb among wolves.

And she never again came into the parsonage; for the family soon moved to a distant city. And it was not long afterward that word came to Mrs. Thomas that Mrs. Oviatt had gone beyond; and at the time of her release it was said that her husband was beastly drunk, even to her latest breath treating her most brutally.

" 'There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest,' " said Mrs. Thomas when she heard of it. "I am so glad the poor woman has gone."

That last morning, Mrs. Thomas watched her until she turned the corner; then went back to her work, thinking: "O, that I might cheer her dreary life!"

The next one to call the busy housewife from her work was the grocer. As he stopped for her order, he lingered a little by the warm kitchen fire, as though loath to go again into the snowy street. Mrs. Thomas, inquiring after the health of his family, said, "Your children are well, I hope."

"O yes, thank you," said he. "They have had nearly everything that childhood is heir to. But, then, we sometimes get the 'blues' down at our house."

"And," said Mrs. Thomas, "having the 'blues'

once does not insure you against having them again. But there is less storm than sunshine."

"I hope so."

A few unpremeditated words were these, dropped by an energetic, cheery grocer on his round after orders. But they show that beneath the smiling face and within the courageous heart there is a melancholy chord that sings alike in every life.

Then, there was Mr. Crow, the apostate, who had called with a message of woe concerning his wife; and, as it happened, an hour later came that unworthy woman herself with a similar tale of woe concerning her husband.

And, last of all, that dear good Scotch woman, Mrs. MacArthur, called. Charming, indeed, to the interested Mrs. Thomas, was her animated account of Glasgow experiences—the little cottage by the sea where, surrounded by her children, she had spent her summers; the city home, from which little dimpled, laughing, four-year-old Willie slipped away; the gloomy prison, which the good woman used to visit, when a girl, with her mother, carrying portions of Scripture to the unhappy inmates; the great Scotch doctor, from whom she had acquired that knowledge of medicine which had enabled her in all after years to deal out remedies to the poor in her community; and the groups of listeners gathered on the street corners, as Mr. MacArthur, in the strength of his young manhood, delivered to them messages from the Holy Word.

"You should have seen our little Aleck," she said, "standing by his father, holding the hymn-book and

Bible. And he would look up so surprised when the men would begin to throw dust and stones; for sometimes they did not like what Mr. MacArthur said. He was sure to talk very plainly to the men. He always spoke just as he thought was right, happen what would.

"And our Aleck, he was such a good boy; and he was growing to be such a good man, just like his father. Ah, yes, he was a good boy. I can see him now as he looked the morning he left home. That was sixteen years ago, the fall that he was seventeen. He went to sea with good Captain Simpson, a friend of the family. He wrote to us from London, and that 's the last we ever heard from him."

"For what port did they sail?"

"They were to touch Indian ports, landing finally at Calcutta."

"Of course, you wrote after he left London."

"We wrote again and again for one whole year. I addressed him at Bombay, as he directed, and after that at Calcutta, but never could get an answer."

"And, you say, he never wrote to you?"

"I say we never heard from him after he left London. He may have written; for it was about that time that we left Glasgow for America."

"Did he not know you were coming?"

"He knew that we thought of coming. And the letter that I sent to Bombay told him of our final decision. If that was lost, of course, he would never know just where we were."

"When you came from Glasgow, did you come directly to this place?"

"No; we were in Chicago awhile, where Mr. MacArthur taught piano to the students in the university, and also to ladies in the city."

"He did not like his work there?"

"Very much; but his health was not good, so we came down here. And we have lived in this city ten years."

"Enough has crossed your path to fill a volume."

"Enough, some have told me, to make me lose faith in God. And yet, though I mourned for Aleck as dead almost night and day for five years, I always felt sure that it would come out right in the end."

"It must, surely," said Mrs. Thomas.

So the hours of the day passed, as one or another called with a heart of trouble to unburden to the sympathetic pastor or his wife.

And after the last one had gone, and Mrs. Thomas stood alone by the parlor window, watching busy people as they passed in the falling shadows, she said to herself: "Here are the grocer, the butcher, the drayman, and the laundryman, the merchant, the banker, and the doctor, nearly all greeting you with smiling faces as they go on their various errands. To meet them, you could not know but that life had used them well. And yet, I wonder across how many pathways the shadows lie thick and dark."

The twilight deepened, and the snow began to fall. Still this woman stood looking out into the night. And as she stood there, her heart went out after all those sheep of the fold who had sought counsel of their shepherd or shepherdess that day. O, this mellow undertone in human hearts! We have heard it, every

one. And Mrs. Thomas could not but feel how very much alike, at best, we all are. For sorrow makes the whole world kin. And that night she would have gathered to herself every one of those troubled hearts.

"Viola," said her husband, when, later in the evening, they sat together before the fire in the study, "do tell me what to preach about."

"Why, I thought you had your sermon all ready for Sunday. I supposed you finished it this morning."

"So I did; but I do not believe it will do any good. I wish you would help me now."

"I would, if I could."

"Let me read what I have written, and see what you can do."

So she listened to the reading of a very carefully-prepared sermon, containing a message that they both thought at the beginning of the week would be helpful to their people.

"Now, that is not what our people want to hear next Sunday, is it, Viola?"

"No, dear, I do not think it is. That sermon is all right, only it does not fit the patient's case just now."

"I see it does not," said he. "There is no message in that for Mrs. Oviatt with her wicked husband, or Mrs. MacArthur with her lost son, or the grocer with his 'blues,'" he continued.

And the young minister folded the sermon, and put it on the table.

"Some message of comfort, dear, is what the people want."

"Yes, and they shall have it. They shall not be fed on husks when the gospel is so full of what they need."

And Sunday morning, with some knowledge of their heart troubles, Mr. Thomas came before his people with a fitting message. He looked out over his audience. There was Mrs. Oviatt, with her face of patient suffering. There was the beaming face of the grocer. There was Mr. Crow—his wife never came when he was present. There were the dear, sweet Scotch woman, and others with peculiar experiences.

He announced the hymn. And they fervently sung:

> **"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,**
> **Pilgrim through this barren land."**

Then he prayed. And as they listened to his petition, words of comfort and consolation poured, like the "oil of gladness," into their hearts.

Soon he announced his text: "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." And as he urged the message home, he felt that light was flooding their souls; for he could see it beaming in their faces. And he was borne on by the strength that comes from praying and sympathetic listeners. "Peace, troubled heart!" he said. "Thy God's thou art."

And when, at the close, they sung, "Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can not heal," many a one instinctively turned and grasped the hand of his neighbor, in the joy of that consolation. And they sung on:

> **"Come to the feast of love; come, ever knowing**
> **Earth has no sorrow but Heaven can remove."**

Sing on, brave hearts; for your singing hath also comforted one lonely listener. One in the congrega-

tion had, indeed, come that morning to the "feast of love," with a heart full of trouble, and had found peace. His sorrow had caused him to stumble. But the prayer, the sermon, and the hymns of that sacred hour had chased his doubts away. And Ward Hetherington went out from the South-side Church, strong in his newly-gained victory.

"That was a message from heaven," a stranger remarked to him, as he passed out.

"Yes, it was," said he.

As he walked away, he pondered. He had thought partially to forget his trouble by avoiding Alice; and for that purpose he had left his own Church. And yet he saw how he had been acting the coward. Certainly, the sacrifice he might make would be the greatest that could be required of him. Yet he presumed that others had made as great. Could not he suffer with the strongest? For her sake he would. Nothing should conquer him. He would go back to St. Paul's as usual. He would accompany Alice from church as before. And if the time should come to part with her—but we leave him in his quandary.

Chapter VIII

Sacrifice Rewarded

That night Ward Hetherington went to his own church. But none of the Claymores were present. He was disappointed. It would have been some comfort just to see Alice. The next morning at the store he learned that Mr. Claymore, though much improved, had been somewhat ill. This would furnish him a pretext for going to the house that evening.

The sunshine of the afternoon had suddenly given way to clouds and darkness and storm. The air was wild with swirling, feathery snowflakes. The wind, at one moment a far-away, pathetic wail, was at the next, an oncoming, thundering Niagara. Once, Ward Hetherington would have reveled in this tumult of the elements. The soughing of the evergreens and the rattling of the bare poplars and maples would have been rapturous music. The madly-driven snow, fast filling the path before him, would have caused ecstatic joy. But now the night's weird voices, losing their wild and tender melody, seemed only responsive to his own soul's anguish. And he bent his head to the storm, and pressed his way toward her home. O that he could go to her that night, and pour out his love! He longed to do it. Yet he knew that the truest love would not declare itself, if, by so doing, it would mar the happiness of another. No, he would not. And he let the wild night sing its lament into his soul, and

trudged on. At length he neared the house. The light from the window, streaming out through the thickly-falling snow, seemed mockery. For he had an undefined feeling that he would soon hear from her own lips the story of her life purpose, and return into the night utterly forsaken.

"O, what is love, to be thus tried?" he said. "I can not understand it."

From the avenue he walked slowly across the lawn, and stopped beneath a snow-laden cypress near the house. All the while the wind, piling higher the drift, seemed more surely to shut him from the woman he loved. Pushing a path through the white mound, he stepped to the door, and paused a moment. "The truest love!" he whispered; and, hesitating no longer, he rang the bell. Miss Claymore herself opened the door.

"Good evening, Ward."

"Good evening, Alice. Is your father at home?"

"Not just now; but do come in."

"I understood he was not well;" as he quickly brushed the snow from his hat and coat, before stepping into the warm hall.

"He was somewhat indisposed yesterday," said she; "but he seemed perfectly well this afternoon. You must have nearly perished facing this fierce wind."

"But, you remember, a winter storm is my delight."

"Yes, I know; but such a 'howling wilderness' as this would keep most people in doors. Please come this way, if you do not mind. Mother has friends in the parlor."

And she led him through the hall into the snug but

handsome library. Here, earlier in the evening, in the most congenial company of poets, historians, and philosophers, looking down upon them from various shelves of broad book-cases, Mrs. Claymore and her daughter, at either end of the table before the grate, had sat writing.

"I am glad of an excuse to put away my pen," said Alice, as she pushed the table back.

Then, in the easy chairs that stood in the glow of the blazing fire, she and Ward sat down.

"I hope this is not a very serious intrusion upon your plans," said he.

"O, no, no, not at all. My work is not so urgent."

"I missed you at church last night."

"Yes," said she, "mother and I staid with father. He urged us to go; yet I saw that she wanted to stay, so I staid. But you were not there in the morning."

"I went over to hear Mr. Thomas, as I had not heard him since my return. It is a delight to visit his church. He seems so truly like a shepherd with his flock. He has the instincts of an ideal pastor—never drives his people, but leads them most skillfully."

"By the way," said she, picking up a late book from the table, "have you read these sketches?"

"Yes, last fall, in Scotland where the scene was laid."

"What a privilege!"

"Indeed, it was. I strolled through the fragrant autumn woods and beside the river, with that book in my hand. Excepting the works of the masters on the Continent, there was nothing in all my trip that I so enjoyed. But I left Scotland with regret that I could

not have passed through one of those big snow-storms."

"You ought to live at the North Pole," laughed Alice.

"A few degrees this side would suit me as well. But I really should like the sensation of being shut in from the outside world for two weeks by those mountains of snow."

Then they discussed their favorite authors, or took them from the shelves and read marked passages.

Presently, conversation turned to college days, with hard study, class and society rivalries, exhilarating sports, and friendships between students and professors.

"Had you heard of Dr. Comstock's resignation?" said Ward.

"No, I had not. Why was that?"

"I do not know; though there seemed to be a little restlessness with regard to him during my Senior year."

"Where is he now?"

"I think in one of the Western universities. Another item of news you may not have heard: Maud Hamilton has finally married Simpson."

"Well, well, I never thought that would happen. She was such a high-headed girl."

"Another bit of information: The new Science Hall is about completed; and the library has been enlarged. Alma Mater is flourishing."

"I should almost like to re-enter next fall."

"Then I should want to be a Sophomore; for we never quite forgave you Freshmen for stealing our cream," laughed Ward.

"Well, I think you squared accounts when you took the tugs and left our teams helpless. If you had seen us on our way home, you would have thought that you were even. We waited in Mrs. Thornton's parlor while a committee scoured the neighborhood for harness. Finally, at one o'clock in the morning, we started, and when a mile from nowhere our rig broke down, and we stood in shivering groups under the pale moonlight, or tramped about over the frosty snow to keep warm, while the boys tried to repair damages. It was one of the coldest nights. Why, it makes me chilly to think of it now."

So delightfully, thus far, had the evening passed, that Ward seemed to forget, for the time, that anything had come between him and his hopes. It was so like the old friendship that they had enjoyed since childhood. In the animation of the hour the bitter disappointment that had shadowed his path during the last few days like an unpleasant dream, had almost faded from memory.

The evening might have passed as usual had not their conversation turned again to Church affairs and people.

"O, I must tell you something," she said, suddenly. And the whole terrible truth rushed back upon him. The illusion of the hour was gone.

"Now," thought he, "the time has come to hear the unwelcome news from her own lips!"

He was dazed. She, evidently, did not notice his confusion, and continued:

"Possibly you know that Mother Barker is always dreaming dreams and seeing visions."

Ward felt relieved; for it was not the much dreaded news that she would impart to him this time.

"Well," Alice went on, "I have been the object of one of her supernatural revelations. She stopped the other morning to deliver to me its contents. It came to her straight from heaven. There was no mistaking its validity."

Ward was now listening very attentively to another one of the old lady's eccentric notions.

"She came early, and I sat down at once to hear her story. The interpretation of her dream was on this wise: It had been clearly revealed to her that I should go to China."

His heart sunk again, and he scarcely heard what followed.

"She begged of me to heed the voice that so clearly spoke to her. 'But, Mother Barker,' said I, 'I think the voice will speak to me when I am to go; and when it speaks, I shall heed.' I am sure she thought me fallen from grace."

Ward could not quite understand what she meant. But, in his confusion, he managed to say:

"Alice, I thought—I—has not the voice spoken yet?"

"Not that voice," she answered, softly. "I have felt impelled to work for those people; but, as yet, have not thought that I ought to go abroad. There is so much to be done here in order to sustain the effort there."

Ward could scarcely believe his senses. He was as nearly confounded by joy as he previously had been by grief.

"O, Alice!" he said, with much feeling. And, rising from his chair, he stood before her. "Can I believe what you say?"

She did not know what to make of it. It was so unlike the staid Ward Hetherington.

"I do not understand you," she said. "You certainly do not doubt my word."

And, drawing his chair beside her, he told her of his foreboding.

"I am very sorry," she said, with emotion. "Why did you not come to me? I could have set you right at once."

"I did not come because I loved you; and I would not, for the world, have stood between you and happiness in any chosen plan. I felt as if it would almost kill me to have it so; but I was determined not to be in your way. I hope I did not seem indifferent."

"O, I could not think that of you, Ward."

"Alice, never until to-night have I told you of my love. But I felt that you knew it all. And," with a deep longing in his eyes, "I have come to believe that you are mine. Am I right?"

In her face he read his answer.

. . . . . .

When, an hour later, he stepped again into the night, it was with a heart for the furious wind and the driving snow. He reviewed the evening's conversation.

"Yes, I know what love is now. It has had its final test."

You think, Ward Hetherington, that love shall not again be tried? The years shall answer!

Chapter IX

Too Far

Once more the autumn leaves clothe the woodlands. Six months have passed since the joyous wedding-bells rang out the marriage of Ward and Alice. For more than two years Mr. Thomas has been connected with the South-side enterprise.

One morning, entering the kitchen where his wife stood rolling out cookies, while a tiny dimpled face was smiling before her, he said: "Viola, I have a plan, and you will have to help put it through."

And, picking up one of the little brown cakes, he sat down to sample it, while he talked the matter over with his wife.

"Well," said she, "I shall have to know what your plan is before I agree to help you."

"It is time we had a Woman's Missionary Society in our Church."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, I do."

"Why, we can scarcely walk alone. Do you not think we ought to wait until we are stronger?" asked Mrs. Thomas, who was always less sanguine than her husband.

"No, I think that the history of a Church is largely determined by its initial character. If we rightly educate our people at the beginning, they will always retain the benevolent spirit. And there is no better way to do it than as I suggest."

"Well, if you think that is what ought to be done, what do you want me to do about it?" willing, after a mild protest, to accede to his judgment.

"There is the district secretary, Mrs. Crowell. She would be glad of an opportunity to exercise her calling. Suppose you write to her, and see," said he, "if we do n't succeed."

And they did succeed. Mrs. Crowell was, indeed, glad to plead before the enlightened congregation at the little church the cause of the unsaved millions. And fifteen earnest women responded to her plea, by giving their names for membership. In a subsequent meeting for organization, Mrs. Crowell said: "Whom will you have for president, ladies?"

They hesitated; for it was such new work to them all. Finally, Mr. Thomas arose. "If you will pardon me," said he, "I would like to nominate Mrs. Chandler."

"O, indeed, I never could do that," she protested. For her request always was: "Let me be the 'power behind the throne.'"

"O yes, begging your pardon, I am sure you could," he said. "It is not as difficult as you think."

And the timid woman sat back helpless before the unanimous vote that put her in the chair.

All felt the wisdom of the choice. But not until a few weeks later, on the occasion of their first public meeting, did they begin to realize the power that lay in the reserve of this quiet woman. And when, at the close of the service, some ventured to congratulate her upon her success—a very delicate task, by the way, when addressing one who has delivered the King's

message—she simply replied: "Do not commend me. I did not do it."

But the novelty of the undertaking having worn off, a few, as almost always happens, began to lose their "first love." Then followed months of heroic struggle on the part of their good president to keep these half-hearted members interested. There were so many other affairs that took their time and thought, that it often seemed as if she had to carry the whole burden upon her own shoulders.

So Mrs. Chandler had hard work; and sometimes, in an hour of great discouragement, she would come over to the parsonage and pour out her trouble to the sympathetic Mrs. Thomas.

"I 'm sure I can not bear this any longer," she would say. "There must be something wrong in me, or the ladies would take hold better. I am so absorbed in this work myself that I do not see how they can be so indifferent. The burden nearly crushes me. I must let some one else take the presidency."

"No, the fact that you feel the responsibility a burden is the very reason why you ought to carry it. It is your intense love for this work that especially fits you to be a leader. If, as you think, the society so hardly lives under your administration, what would be the result if one of these half-hearted women were to take your place?"

"But I can not get the ladies to help me out with my programs. They promise to do something, and then the day for the meeting comes and I am left without anything. I believe it would be very much better if you were to become the president. I think

they would rally about you, and the society would prosper."

"O no, that would not do."

"But you are the pastor's wife, and they would feel that they must help you."

"That is one reason why I ought not to be the president."

"You do not mean that you never should have an office?"

"Well, no, not exactly. In a Church where there is absolutely no one else to lead, it would become my duty to supply the want. But no such want exists in this case."

And Mrs. Chandler would go away to make one more determined effort. It was not as nearly dead, however, as she thought. All the while sympathy was deepening in the hearts of the members. And all the while little silvery, life-giving streams were emptying into the great desolate waste of heathenism.

And Mr. and Mrs. Thomas rejoiced to see growing up under their care a most devoted and spiritual Church.

The months passed. One evening, after their little one-year-old daughter had "cuddled doon," Mrs. Thomas sat with her husband a few minutes under the fragrant vines upon the front porch.

"Why so sober, my dear?" she asked.

"I have been thinking about that letter I wrote to Dr. Powers about a year and a half ago." At such a sudden and unexpected moment will an affair that one thought long ago buried come to life again!

"Well, what about it?"

"I have just been reading a stirring appeal from India. Possibly, I ought to write and offer myself."

"Do you really think that? I do not, at all. You settled the question once, and I do not think you ought to bring it up again. It would seem to me like taking matters into our own hands. If the Church wants us, and lays its hand upon us for that work, then will be the time to consider the question of going."

"But the Church, or its representative in Dr. Powers, did lay its hand upon us once."

"And at that time," continued Mrs. Thomas, "we felt that our work was here. Now, does it not seem that we should consider it settled, unless, for some reason, the Church should again call us?"

"Possibly."

"If we are peculiarly fitted for the work," said she, "others will see it soon enough, I am sure, without our suggesting it to them."

And not being fully persuaded in his own mind, the young preacher let the matter drop.

Again the months rolled on. Meanwhile, Mr. Thomas had evinced growing skill in grappling with problems of city life; and, though the pastor of a young Church, he had impressed himself favorably upon his fellow-workers. While his heart was in the work of evangelization everywhere, and he preached vigorously for the support of the work of the Church in every land, he had entirely abandoned the thought of any personal call to the foreign field. Both he and Mrs. Thomas felt that the question was permanently settled.

"Edith," Mrs. Thomas said to the little girl at her knee, "will you go tell papa that supper is ready?"

And while the little busybody tripped up the stairs, the mother propped Master Albert in his carriage near the dining table.

"I have pleasant news," said the preacher when seated. "At least, I am sure you will think it so."

"I am in a mood for pleasant news to-night. What is it?"

"I have a note from Dr. Powers. He is in the city, and will call here this evening."

"Dr. Powers? You do not mean Dr. Powers, of India?"

"None other than that worthy gentleman himself."

"That is pleasant news, surely. I wonder how he happens to be here at this time. And, stranger still, how does he call on us?"

"O, he will stay but a few minutes, I suppose. He sent the note to make sure that I would be at home. He had a message to deliver, he said, and would detain me but a little."

"Did you ever meet this Dr. Powers?"

"Yes, he spoke at the South-side once, before we were married; and you remember that correspondence I had with him. But it is only this word from a friend that brings him here to-night."

When he had come, and the three were seated in the parlor, he said: "Well, Mrs. Thomas, you may thank me that you are not in India to-night."

"How so?" said she.

"O, I had my eye upon your husband when I was here the last time, and might have taken him away."

"I am devoutly thankful," replied Mrs. Thomas, smiling.

"But, Dr. Powers, you have a message?" said the young preacher, anticipating word, possibly, from some former college friend.

Now, Dr. Powers was one of those rising men of large success in the Church, having a strong hold on the work in India, who, nevertheless, had retained his early genial manner. He was so like one's own father or brother that it was a delight to have him in the home. So the preacher and his wife had entered upon the hour's conversation with intense satisfaction. For to those who work steadily in one plot of this great world a wider view is altogether stimulating. And their guest, with no less delight evidently, had made the acquaintance of these two people.

"O yes," said he, "that message. I am glad you spoke of it;" as though, possibly, in the friendly chat of the evening, it might have been forgotten. "That message is from India." Then they surmised what was coming. "And," said he, sitting up suddenly in his chair, and looking straight into the young preacher's face, "Mr. Thomas, you ought to be in India. We have a work there in Calcutta for which you are peculiarly fitted."

"You startle me," said Mr. Thomas. "That question is like Banquo's ghost. It has arisen at most unexpected times; but, lacking the force of a personal call, as I supposed, it has been repeatedly put down, until I thought it settled. And here it is again."

"But, possibly, in this case, it may come to you as a personal call. Here is a particular work, in which I think you would succeed. It is not that indefinite call that comes, in a general way, to many. Allowing

me to speak my own conviction, Mr. Thomas, there is your field over in Calcutta."

"Well," said Mrs. Thomas, "if we only could have some indication that we were called of God to that work." Poor, inconsistent humanity! Had she forgotten the statement to her husband about a year before, when she said to him that they would better wait for the call of the Church, and not depend too much upon their own impressions? And now that the Church had spoken, she was waiting for a higher call.

After a little silence, Mr. Thomas spoke: "If that is what we ought to do, I believe we are willing. But, in so important a case, we want to be sure."

Then followed a variety of questions with regard to climate, the health and moral training of children, and the like.

After that, Dr. Powers took from his pocket an envelope, on which he blocked out the square owned by the Church in Calcutta. A part of the space was already occupied by school-buildings for European and native boys. But there was a large remaining space in the center, which would be very desirable some day for a theological school. It was the dream of the workers in Calcutta that, at the earliest possible date, such a school be erected there, with a view to training young men for work all over India.

"Here, Mr. Thomas, is a splendid opportunity for a young man like you. Take charge of this school and build up the theological department, and, in a few years, just see what you may be doing through native agencies in all parts of the empire."

And, with his sanguine outlook as he opened the

field before them, the great distance but lent a certain charm, which they knew a nearer approach would dispel. And somehow, albeit they had such pledge of victory in their present work, they could not help picturing themselves in that far-away land.

"But, Mr. Thomas, there is one consideration in the way of your leaving this fall. I wish I might take you right back with me. If some one would give me the money for the passage, I would do that, and trust for the rest. But we may have to wait a year, at least, and see how the finances open."

And much more they said, until, at a late hour, the missionary arose to depart.

"O, you are not going to-night?"

"I must. I promised Dr. Winthrow I would stay with him."

And then the doctor's carriage was announced.

"I hope some time to see you in India," he said, as he waved adieu.

They watched the vehicle until it turned the corner a block away. Just then the moon, gliding from behind a cloud, sent its silvery ray down through the sweet-scented climbing vines over their porch, and shone gently upon their heads.

"That peaceful moonlight never looked so beautiful to me before," she said. "I want to linger here awhile, for I have a vague feeling that we shall soon go."

He drew her to him. And the fragrance from the vines fell richly around them. On this little square porch they so often had sat down, of a summer night, to talk over the affairs of their parish.

He Drew Her to Him

"Viola, darling," he said presently, "this parsonage has been a blessed home to us. And you have come into my life and so strengthened and sweetened it! And now to think of taking you away off there."

"But you know, dear, that I could go anywhere with you. Only we want to be sure that there is where we belong."

Then they passed out from under the narrow moonbeam into the house, and, shutting the door, went to their own room. Here, all unconscious of the great question that was thrilling the hearts of father and mother, lay the two children, sweetly sleeping.

"I do not know," said Mr. Thomas, as he bent yearningly over them, "about taking them to that far-away land." And he kissed the dimpled hands upon the white spread.

"It is hard to know what to do," said she.

"Yes, it is. One may easily tell other people that they ought to go, and that they ought to be ready to go now. It fits well in a missionary sermon. But when we apply it to ourselves, it is not so easy."

"You know, my dear, it is always easier to tell other people what to do than to practice yourself. 'If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do,' I suppose the world long ago would have been brought to Christ."

"Looking candidly at the question of going, though, I know we need not hesitate to give up our work here," said Mr. Thomas. "The fact is, there are plenty of men who would be ready, at once, to step into the place we leave. We really need not consider ourselves indispensable to the success of this enterprise."

"No, indeed," said his wife. "It is not altogether pleasant to contemplate; but it is true that we would scarcely be missed if we were to go elsewhere."

"True," said he; "God's work does not depend upon individuals."

"That fact will apply in Calcutta as well as here."

"That is true, again; but the men available for that work are so few that the call to those few seems particularly imperative. But I am sure of this, Viola: wherever God plainly leads, we can safely follow."

"Yes," said his wife, "if he plainly leads, I have nothing more to say."

Early the next morning, the door-bell rang. It was Mrs. Chandler who stood outside. When admitted, she spoke out with unusual abruptness: "See here, I don't like this!"

"What?" asked Mrs. Thomas, in surprise.

"Why, so much talking with foreigners. I believe there's mischief brewing. He must n't take you to India. You are too good for that work." And the mother heart rebelled against giving up her adopted son and daughter, as she called them. How she could have possessed that bit of information with regard to the call of Dr. Powers, they could not imagine, unless, in some chance flight over her home, some little bird had whispered it to her heart.

Chapter X

They Do Not Know

It was a bright morning late in the month of May. Ward Hetherington, having just bidden his wife good-bye, was hurrying down the walk on his way to the store. And Alice, having watched him until he was out of sight, stood upon their broad porch awaiting the arrival of the postman.

It was a charming spot, the home of this couple. And, as she stood there looking down across the sloping lawn, she thought that earth could scarcely give a choicer habitation than this beautiful home of theirs upon the avenue in this thriving city. Large black walnuts and drooping elms threw their luxuriant shadows upon the thick green grass beneath. Their foliage, not yet ripened into the more dull, dark color of late summer, hung fresh and light upon the boughs. At the west of the lawn was a long row of tall and slender poplars, whose tops bent gracefully, and whose silvery leaves quivered in the soft breeze. A few exotic evergreens, of somewhat stunted growth, adorned the lawn, while down in the farther corner were two or three cottonwood trees, with the steady sound as of falling rain among the leaves. A few richly-blooming roses, near the house, sent their fragrance up to where Alice stood; and sprinkled all over the lawn that beautiful May morning were sparkling diamonds, that hung pendent from every blade

of grass. The yellow, the green, the gold, and the blue flashed from every dewdrop; while from a bough that bent gracefully near the corner of the porch a robin warbled the notes of his morning song out into the soft air.

"Eins, zwei, drei," said the postman, a good-natured young German, as he handed out two papers and a letter.

"Ich danke Ihnen," she replied, as she took them. His face shining with pleasure at this unexpected reply in his native tongue, he walked away, as she sat down to read the letter.

While Alice was thus pleasantly employed, the author of the letter, Mrs. Edgecomb, several miles away, happened to be returning from the barn, where she had given direction concerning the day's work to some of the men. As she came upon her side porch she met Mrs. Latimer and Jamie.

"I know you are surprised," said her caller, "at so early a visit."

"Glad, nevertheless," replied Mrs. Edgcomb, cordially. "Come in, please. Possibly Jamie would like to look at my chickens. They are out by the barn." And away the little fellow skipped, a lad of six years now, while the two ladies entered the house.

"Did you write that letter you spoke about Sunday?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Edgcomb. "Alice must have received it this morning."

"I thought that, if you had not written it, you might tell her that we had promise of one more member. So there will be three of us to begin with, besides

others who I think would surely join if some one could come and organize an Auxiliary."

"And who is the third one?"

"Mrs. Hargrave, the dear woman. At first she thought she could n't do anything on account of her baby. But when Jamie told her that he would go to all the meetings and take care of the little one for her, she consented; for she thinks there never was such a boy as Jamie, and she will do almost anything to please him."

"We shall have to call him our little missionary," said Mrs. Edgcomb.

"That has been my name for him ever since he was a baby. And it fits him exactly. Sometime, maybe he will—" and just then the boy came rushing in, and she did not finish her sentence.

"When will you hear from Alice?" she said, rising to go.

"Possibly day after to-morrow."

"If I can, I will come over to hear her reply; but, if not, I will see you at church Sunday. Good morning."

In a home opposite Fayette Park, in the city, that morning, Mrs. Crowell had addressed her husband thus: "If I should go out into the country three or four days, do you think you could survive?"

"It would be mighty hard; but if I have to, I suppose I can try."

"Well, then, I shall soon give you the opportunity. I only hope your vitality will hold out till I return."

"Allow me to ask the cause of your departure, my good wife."

"Missionary work," she said, with a curious expression, as if she would inquire whether the news fell like music on his ears.

"O, ho!" said he, in a slightly sarcastic manner, "one would suppose the ultimate aim of a Foreign Missionary Society to be the conversion of the heathen. But you women seem to be laboring continually to convert the people of your own land."

"And that is wherein our labor is greatly increased. If only we were not compelled to secure first the conversion of Christian people, our task would be much simplified. It is just such an evangelistic tour as this that I am planning now."

"But you will not need to complete your arrrangements to-day, so I must be off. There will be time this evening to finish what you had to say. Good-bye."

On the contrary, her arrangements most certainly could not await the pleasure of her half-interested husband. They must be consummated at once; and to that end she set out in the direction of Ward Hetherington's home, turning up the stone steps from the avenue just as Alice, who sat in a rocker on the front porch, arose from reading her letter. "You are the very woman I want to see," said Alice, as Mrs. Crowell approached.

"How can that be, Mrs. Hetherington? Has some good angel communicated the fact that I wished to see you?"

"This letter will explain. But do sit in this rocker and rest a few minutes first," as she drew an easy chair near her own.

"I came here to see if you could help me a little."

"Certainly I will, if I can. What is it that you want?"

"I have felt, for some time, that we ought to have more missionary societies among our country Churches. But I have not known just where to begin to organize them. I have determined, however, to start out this week somewhere, and see what I can do."

"Strange, indeed, how your need fits into mine. This letter is a request from my aunt to secure some one who could go to Bloomingdale for next Sunday night and organize the ladies there. If you had not come, I should have been over to see you on this very errand."

"A happy coincidence, surely. I shall be only too glad of the opportunity at Bloomingdale. May I ask you, Mrs. Hetherington, to let your aunt know that I will be at her home Saturday morning, if it is convenient for her?"

"Indeed, you may depend upon me for that. I know she will be delighted to receive you. You will find those country folk charmingly hospitable. And, if you can persuade them to feel as generous toward the unfortunate heathen as they do toward their fortunate friends at home, you will have done a service."

The next morning—a lovely May morning—Mrs. Crowell boarded the train for a ride of fifty miles across the country, to Bloomingdale. "O, 'if they only knew!'" she thought, as she flew past the fields of luxuriant green, prophetic of abundant crops in harvest, and the pastures, feeding herds of cattle for the city market. "With all this abundance, 'if they

only knew' the bitter, relentless poverty of the wretched millions that people the Orient, I am sure that they would open their hands and let the sacred treasure flow."

"Good morning." And the cheery salutation of Mr. Newton roused her from her meditations. "I am glad to see you out in the country," said he.

"Thank you. I think I shall enjoy it, myself."

"Where are you going?"

"To Bloomingdale. They wish to organize an Auxiliary there. I shall stop at Linden afterward."

"Very good. Success to you," as he hurried back to the rear of the car, to finish his chat with a brother traveler.

When he had left, a plainly-dressed little woman, before unnoticed, in front of Mrs. Crowell, turned and said: "Then you are interested in missionary work."

"Yes," was the reply. "I judge you are. May I ask where you live?" thinking that she might meet her again somewhere in her travels.

"O, I live in Wing," said the woman.

"Wing?" said Mrs. Crowell. "Where is that?"

"Why, do n't you know where Wing is? I thought everybody knew where Wing is."

But Mrs. Crowell felt a little complacent over her ignorance on that point when she learned that the spot in question was a mere hamlet away from the railroad in an adjoining State.

Then the shrill whistle of the engine heralded its approach to Bloomingdale. Soon Mrs. Crowell stepped out upon the platform, to see Mrs. Edgecomb's comfortable carriage and handsome team of colts. In

less than an hour, she stepped out upon the stile at the farm-house.

"O, the breath from the green fields!" she said, a little later, as she sat resting in Mrs. Edgecomb's cool parlor. "It is worth coming a long distance to find this garden-spot."

"Possibly you can appreciate it better than we," replied her hostess. "By the way, how would you enjoy making a few calls this afternoon? We might prevail upon some to come out to-morrow night; or, if not, they would, at least, be glad to see you."

"I should greatly enjoy it." And she did. But O, the excuses! It was surprising how many they met.

At one home they found the farmer himself within doors; and he, being a man of decided opinions, and much more talkative than his wife, took it upon himself to entertain them. After conversation of a general character, he suddenly addressed himself to Mrs. Crowell:

"There is something I have against these ministers."

"Well?"

"They never know that a farmer's pocket has any bottom to it. They think that, because we have lots to eat, we have money. We do, most of us, have enough to eat."

"That sounds plausible," said she. "But I have not been through the country with my eyes shut. I know, of course, that there are conditions here that do not appear to the casual observer. I know that, in too many cases, behind the broad acres and magnificent crops are mortgaged farms. And yet, after

all, I have seen that the people out here have money for a variety of purposes. What I want—"

"Now you are coming to your hobby," broke in Mr. Olmstead.

"Yes, now I am coming to my favorite subject. What I want is that a little of this money that flows so easily for other objects shall be turned into the missionary treasury."

"But, really, now, do you think that those heathen appreciate the truth of the gospel as we do?"

"O, I know it! And often, they appreciate it much more. It sometimes seems that those who are lowest in this world get highest in the kingdom. They must take some hold of the truth when they are ready to die for it."

"Well, Mrs. Crowell, you must not care about anything that I have said," he added later, as he assisted the ladies into the carriage. "I always say what I think."

After that, they drove off from the main road to a plain house, where, as they entered the gate, a poor woman opened the door. When she had seated her callers, she and another woman who sat in the room resumed their smoking.

"We are calling upon the ladies and inviting them to the meeting to-morrow night."

"Yes, I hearn about the meetin'," removing the old pipe from her mouth; "but I do n't s'pose I can come. I hain't a bit well. And, if I could come, it would n't do no good; for I could n't jine yer socity." And she resumed her pipe.

"You think not?" asked Mrs. Crowell.

Again holding her pipe in her hand: "I do n't see how I could. You see, my man ain't wuth nuthin' to work sence he was hurt, and it takes all the money I can git a washin' to support the family." And then she smoked away again.

"Well, come out if you can, even if you do not join the society. You may hear something that you will like," said Mrs. Edgecomb, as they rose to go.

"Mebbe I will," said she. Then, turning to Mrs. Crowell, "If you should say suthin' like what the parson said last Sunday, I 'd be mighty glad I 'd come."

"What was that?"

"About Dan'l Webster. It seemed like old times. I used to know Dan'l Webster. I 've hearn 'im preach a heap o' times."

"Daniel Webster?"

"Why yes. He was a New Light preacher. And he used to come to our house, when I was a little gal, about so high. He was an awful good man, and he thought a lot o' me."

Mrs. Crowell could scarcely restrain her merriment at the old lady's fond remembrance of the great Daniel Webster. A strange rôle this for the famous orator—a New Light preacher!

One more stop they made that afternoon, this time, as it proved, at the home of a family recently come from the city. The young lady who greeted them at the door was one whom Mrs. Crowell had frequently met at Fayette Park Church; and the surprise was mutual.

"Why, Mrs. Crowell!" said she. "How delightful!

I am just dying to see some one from the city." Then, after they were duly seated: "Do tell me about everybody."

"Your friends are well, so far as I know."

"Do you know anything about the people in that part of the city called Elm Hill? I have several friends there."

"I do not; but did you ever live there?"

"Yes, our home was there when we first came to the city."

"Why, that was near the South-side Church."

"But I did n't care anything about the South-side. I did n't care anything about Mr. Thomas."

"Then you did not like him as well as you liked the pastor at Fayette Park?" Now, the pastor of the latter Church was by no means popular, and that young lady, herself, had been heard to make more than one disparaging remark concerning him.

"No, he preached such long sermons."

"Why, I have understood from every one that his sermons were very short."

"Well, perhaps it was because I did n't like him that they seemed long. We attended the South-side when we first went out to Elm Hill, and we never liked it."

"That seems strange," remarked Mrs. Crowell, "when every one that belongs there is so very enthusiastic."

"I like a large church better," continued the young lady. "And the music there was nothing compared with what we had at Fayette Park. The organ was so small, more like a country church."

She never once thought to mention the spiritual qualities of the little Church she spurned. And yet that Church, for loyalty, promptness in financial obligations and in spiritual power, headed the list of Churches of which Mrs. Crowell had knowledge.

"Were you a member of the Missionary Society?"

"No, I was not," said she; and very languidly and very coldly: "I don't know that I care anything about it."

When they were again in the street, Mrs. Crowell said:

"I fear there is not much hope for her. She does not know that she cares anything about this work. She is too languid to know whether she cares or not. I should think more of her if she knew she did not care. Not care anything about this work? Why, we care something about dress; we care about food; we care about our home; we care a considerable about our father's or our brother's or our husband's business. And dare we say that we care nothing about our Heavenly Father's business?"

Sunday morning Mrs. Crowell sat with Mrs. Edgecomb, among the listeners in Bloomingdale Church. As soon as the pastor had pronounced the benediction, a sweet-faced lad of six years stepped quickly to her side; for the good people of the Church had talked of her coming until even the little folks were expectant.

"Please, Mrs. Crowell, will you go home with us to dinner?" said the little fellow.

"Yes, my boy, if that is your mamma's wish, and Mrs. Edgecomb will consent."

"O yes, yes; that 's just what mamma 's been talking about."

And the lad having slipped away to adjust the matter between his mother and Mrs. Edgecomb, a decision was soon amicably made, by which the latter released all further claim to her guest for that day; and the delighted boy came back to communicate the result to Mrs. Crowell.

On the way to his home, little Jamie Latimer claimed the privilege of sitting on the back seat of the big country wagon with his new-found friend.

"You are going to preach to-night, ain't you?" he asked in all good faith, as he looked up smilingly.

"O no, my dear, not that at all," pinching his chubby cheek. "I shall talk a little."

"And what will you talk about?"

"I shall tell you about the people who live on the other side of the world, and do n't know about God."

"And anything else?"

"Yes, I shall try to tell you how you can help some of them to learn about him."

"I 'd like to know," said the boy, "for mamma has read to me about some of those people over there, and it 's dreadful, the way they do. Mamma almost cries sometimes when she 's telling me about them, she feels so bad."

"It is enough to make any one feel bad," said Mrs. Crowell.

"O, Mrs. Crowell," said he, suddenly changing the subject, "do you see that pretty cow?"

"Where?" she said, looking in vain for an object that woud bear out the description.

"Why, just here, over this fence. She has such a lovely face." And surely the face was pleasing; but the boy had altogether missed the ugly back and prominent hips.

"See here," said he, calling attention to the left, "that horse is the best one on this place."

"Why, how is that?" she asked in surprise, as she surveyed the bony animal.

"Why, it 's so gentle." And she could easily believe it.

So they rode on, talking pleasantly of other cows and horses as they passed, many of which possessed real beauty. And the flowers—O, how he did delight in the flowers that adorned the highway on either side in such varied profusion! The red, the purple, the white, and the pink, prompted frequent ejaculations from the beauty-loving boy. But he hung with the greatest admiration upon the colors of the wild rose that climbed the fence-posts at frequent intervals.

"O, just look at this pig!" he cried out suddenly, as they neared their own home. "Do you know, that 's my pig. Is n't he a fat one?" So he was. But the little fellow took no notice of the evidence of his pet's recent mud-bath.

"I have observed rather an unusual trait in your boy." This to Mrs. Latimer, as they entered the house; while Jamie and his father put the team away. "He never calls attention to the defects of anything."

"We have often observed it. I do not know why it is, but he always avoids speaking of what is unpleasant. He sees something good to talk about in

everything. I have sometimes thought that he had no eye to beauty; but I think it is simply that he has no eye to what is n't beauty; for he never speaks of it."

That night the church was full. And, as she rose to speak, Mrs. Crowell looked out into the faces of many bright young men and women and interested older people; and she felt that, "if they only knew" about the needs of the Christless millions and the privilege of sending them the blessed news of salvation, these generous-hearted people, whom she had already learned to love, would respond royally.

And yet she remembered how hard it was to make most people understand; and she remembered that only two or three of the ladies, in her previous conversation with them, had expressed any special interest in the work of saving the world.

So it was with some trepidation herself that she stood before them to plead the cause of the heathen. And, when she had finished, she simply asked how many would consider it a privilege to help save this lost world.

"I know," said she, "how full of cares you are out here in the country. I know that you have to work hard; and I know, too, that there are already so many demands upon you in connection with the Church that you feel that you can scarcely meet them. And yet, would not even you busy folks like to share this privilege? It is a work for those who have worse than nothing in this world, and, because they think they are without souls, no hope whatever for the world to come."

While she waited for an answer, sixteen women

added their names to the muster-roll of that ever-increasing army that is set for the liberation of the enthralled daughters of heathendom.

As she left the church, to go home with Mrs. Edgecomb, Mrs. Crowell stopped to give one cheering word to Jamie. For Mrs. Latimer had been made treasurer of the Auxiliary. A very happy hit this proved; for her little missionary soon learned to collect, with almost unerring success, the quarterly dues.

Later that evening Mrs. Edgecomb said: "I believe, if we could have prevailed upon Carrie Hawkins to join, all the other young ladies would have followed her example." Thus, while one young woman refuses to help, some little part of the Master's vineyard waits for laborers.

A few days afterward, having effected similar organizations in two other country Churches, Mrs. Crowell found herself whirling pleasantly away on the fast mail toward the city. "So," thought she, "do the inventions of man, intended only for his own accommodation and aggrandizement, tend to the furtherance of the kingdom. 'If they only knew' what even their unconscious effort is doing toward the evangelization of the world!"

Chapter XI

Light After Darkness

Mr. Thomas sat reading the evening paper. It was now over three years since we saw him standing in his pulpit that Sunday morning, with a message of peace for his people. And it was more than six months since that September evening when he and his wife, having bidden farewell to Dr Powers, stood together in the moonlight under their fragrant vines. Six months! And nothing more definite had come to them than the knowledge of increasing financial depression, which had embarrassed alike the work at home and abroad. Not only were candidates for the foreign field unable to go, but, for lack of passage money, even missionaries at home on leave were unable to return.

As Mrs. Thomas joined him in the parlor, he looked up from his paper.

"Do you think," said he, "that that call to India could have been intended merely to fit us for more effective service right here at home?"

"It might be," said she. "I think it must often happen that the Lord lays his hand upon people to empower them for service in their own land; for it requires workers here to sustain those there. It may be that is what we are to do."

"I am sure," said Mr. Thomas, "if that is what the call was intended to do, it has accomplished its end."

"True," said she. Then, changing the subject: "Were you through with the paper?"

But as he was passing it to her, his eye fell on something that arrested his attention.

"What is this?" he said breathlessly, as he quickly opened the paper. "O, Viola, Mr. A. H. MacArthur was killed last night in that western cyclone."

"O! O!" said Mrs. Thomas; "what will poor Mrs. MacArthur do? She told me only last week that he was soon to quit the road and come home to spend his closing days in peace and quiet with her. He was a good man. She will mourn so for him; I fear it will kill her."

"See here," said Mr. Thomas, looking the account through. "He was stricken down while reading his Bible in his room at the hotel. So like the dear old man. Always ready. No question about where he is to-night. And in another part of the building was a company of hilarious young people, who were thrown into the wildest consternation by the flying timbers. We must go over to Mrs. MacArthur's at once."

"It is all too true," said she, an hour later, in reply to their solicitous inquiry. "It happened last night. I did not know what was the trouble then. But all night I could not sleep. I was in such distress that I was obliged to get up and take medicine. But that gave me no relief. This morning I went to the office, as usual, for my mail. I have been going there so many years, that I am well known. The clerk saw at once that I knew nothing of what had happened, and he spoke so suddenly: "Why, did n't you know Mr. MacArthur was killed in the cyclone last night?"

"He could n't have done worse if he had shot me. I fell to the floor, and it was some time before I was able to come away."

"Have you heard from the scene of the accident?"

"Ah, yes." And here the awful thought of it broke fresh upon her, and she burst into tears. After a little she forced herself to speak. "The body will reach here to-morrow morning, and the funeral services will be held at two o'clock in the afternoon, if that hour will suit you. And then we will lay him in Walnut Hill, beside our Annie. Sweet Annie! She was a beautiful girl. You remember I told you about her? She was the mother of these two boys that live with me now. Have I told you abouf my son Amos, who lives in the southern part of the State?"

"I have heard you speak of him."

"You remember, he is the infidel. I wish, Mr. Thomas, you would talk to him. I think you might do him good. He is in the dining-room now. Would you mind coming this way?"

When, in a little while, she returned to the parlor, Mrs. Thomas said: "It may be, Mrs. MacArthur, that behind this mysterious providence lies the conversion of your son."

"Ah, well, I hardly know. It may be. I hope so. But so many tears and prayers have been poured out in his behalf that I sometimes almost despair. He used to be such a good little Christian when he was a lad. And how he could stray as he has I have never understood. Why, I could n't do wanting my religion. The boy can't know what he is missing."

Several months passed. Mrs. MacArthur was a

frequent caller at the parsonage; for Mr. Thomas, having been a loyal friend to her departed husband, and having officiated at his funeral, very naturally became her counselor in adjusting the small estate. This item occasioned no little correspondence with life and accident insurance companies, and not a few interviews with lawyers. And, as there are always those ready to devour widows' houses, the case of Mrs. MacArthur proved no exception. Repeated efforts were made by Mr. Thomas to save for her every dollar of the small amount that her husband left.

Moreover, the two grandsons, who had been left by the death of their mother to the care of the old people, were causing her serious annoyance. Instead of comforting her in her sorrow, they had taken advantage of her. And her infidel son still stood firm in his unbelief. Altogether, she was about as nearly overwhelmed as mortal could be.

In the time of her sorest need she always fled for counsel to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, and they delighted to help her. The Scotch character was so strong in her, not by a hair's-breadth would she have swerved from what she felt to be squarely honest.

During the years of her stay in the city she had always been hunting up the poor in her neighborhood. She had nursed many a little child or helpless woman through serious sickness. She kept a supply of medicines in her cupboard, and was often seen by Mrs. Thomas to deal it out to this or that poor boy, who had come to get a little more for mother or sister. So, when she herself came to be in perplexity, she found in the pastor and his wife sympathetic advisers.

It was again winter. Mrs. Thomas was seated by her warm fire, when the bell rang, and she admitted Mrs. MacArthur.

"How are you to-day, Mrs. MacArthur?"

"Ah, I am not very well," she said with a sigh. "I am so put about by those boys. Unless they do better, I shall have to let them go. I can not put up with such actions much more."

"I do not believe you ought to try," answered Mrs. Thomas. "They certainly do not appreciate the home you are giving them. It would do them good to be left to care for themselves."

"But, then, for my Annie's sake, you know, I keep hoping that they will do better; and I can't bear to tell them to go."

"Yes, I know," said Mrs. Thomas. "It would be hard to do; but it might be best even for them."

"It is possible," said the old lady. "But, do you know, I have had such queer feelings all the month. I have thought this sorrow would kill me unless I had help from some source. And every now and again I have had some kind of presentiment that help was coming. At times, I could see it right before me, just as plainly as I see you."

"It may have been the Divine Comforter," suggested Mrs. Thomas.

"Yes, but it would leave me again, and I would n't know which way to look; but certainly the help must come, or I shall die. O, it is so hard!" And she looked wearily into the fire.

And Mrs. Thomas sat in silence. Something must be done for that dear Scotch woman. Her case was

becoming almost desperate. Mrs. Thomas was perplexed. She could not see—such is the dimness of human vision—by how beautiful and peaceful a way the Lord, who tenderly cares for his children, was preparing to lead his servant out. Neither could she see, that winter afternoon, how his way was to cross her path and bring into her life hope and fear, sickness and health, sunshine and shadow, joy and sorrow, but at the last victory, triumphant victory!

At length she said: "Now, Mrs. MacArthur, do stay to supper, and this evening we will take you home. It will do you good."

"Ah, but I could n't do that this time. I could n't leave the boys to cook their own supper."

"But just let the boys go for once." And so weary the woman felt that, contrary to her custom, she made no further resistance.

Then followed an hour of pleasant chat upon Scotland and Scotch authors; for once let Mrs. MacArthur forget her present sorrow long enough to return to the scenes of her girlhood, and she would talk away merrily, quite like her old self.

When darkness began to fall, the house was brightly lighted, and Mrs. Thomas excused herself to prepare the supper.

Meanwhile, Mrs. MacArthur took from the table a paper, which happened, as we say, to be a late missionary journal. It was a bright looking paper, and she turned the leaves for something interesting to read. "Handsome building," thought she, as she paused to look at the clear-cut picture of a large school-building. "Ah, in India, is it? The Boy's School in Calcutta."

Then she turned the leaf to learn something more about this interesting school. She read of its small beginning. She read the names of the heroic men and women who, at different times, had been in charge of the school during the years of its struggling growth; and she read, too, how nearly all of them, after only a few months of service, had been compelled to give up their work, and go away to sickness or to death; and she read how, through all these changes and discouragements, there came a time when the success of the school had so increased the number of boys in attendance that a larger building must be erected. And then she read—O! what was this? A name that almost took her breath. And with such eager haste as scarcely to be able to retain her composure, she read the item through:

"Mr. A. H. MacArthur, a Scotch merchant of Calcutta, a layman in our Church, had been studying the situation, and, as a result, determined upon a course which he at that time made known. Prosperity had attended his business efforts; and, as an expression of gratitude, he wished to erect a building that would in all ways be suitable for the education of the boys of this land. With grateful hearts those who had borne the burden of the school accepted his proposition. Ground for a site was secured, and plans for a building were speedily projected. On March 10th the corner-stone was laid by the lieutenant-governor of Bengal, and the boys of the school sang,

> 'A better day is coming,
> A morning promised long.'"

"'A Morning Promised Long'"

Mrs. MacArthur read no further. "A morning promised long." Could it be? Was this the morning for which her soul had cried out in the night? Was this the help that had seemed so near to her at times during the last month? Yes, here was the name, his father's name, A. H. MacArthur. And here was the city of Calcutta, the place for which he sailed so many years ago. Dared she hope that this was her lost son? Evidently he was a good man, and that made the supposition the more likely. Then, the name was not often seen, and that increased the probability of its being her son.

In a little while the oyster-stew was served, and the three sat down to supper. Their sole topic of conversation was the probable new-found MacArthur.

"But I do not know his address. I should not know where in that great city of Calcutta to send my letters."

"If I were you," suggested Mr. Thomas, "I should write to the president of the school, inclosing a letter to this man, if he shall prove to be your son. When you have it addressed, let me see that it is all right, and in a few months you will hear from Calcutta."

She did so, and on the 1st of February posted a letter to her supposed son. It was directed to Mr. A. H. MacArthur, son of Alexander and Margaret MacArthur, Calcutta, India, and put inside another envelope addressed as advised.

As has been said, she posted the letter the 1st of February; and near the last of April she said to her son Amos, who was with her at the time, and who had ridiculed her for writing a letter to a stranger under

the delusion that he was her son, "I shall soon have a letter from Aleck." Amos laughed.

A few days passed. One afternoon, as she lay asleep on the lounge, she dreamed that on the morrow she should hear from her son. When she awoke she said to Amos, "I shall hear from Aleck to-morrow."

"O, mother, I can't get that idea out of your head."

The next morning, at the usual time for the arrival of the mail, the familiar whistle sounded, and Mrs. MacArthur said to her son, "Do you hear the postman?" Then, as he arose to take the mail, "Bring me my letter, Amos."

"What is this?" said the postman; "a letter all the way from Calcutta."

"Is not God good?" said Mrs. Thomas, a few days later, when Mrs. MacArthur had finished telling about it. "It seems as if he had held your boy all these years, and given him back to you just when you most needed him."

The letter had revealed the fact that the vessel on which Aleck had sailed twenty years ago had left Bombay before her letter reached that city; that he had written again and again to Glasgow and to Chicago, but could learn nothing with regard to the whereabouts of his parents; that after staying awhile in Calcutta he had traveled around the world, and a year later returned there; and that several years afterward he married an English lady, the daughter of excellent Christian parents.

"How grateful he must have been to hear from you after all these years of silence!" said Mrs. Thomas.

"Ah, yes. When the president of the school called, he asked, 'Is this your letter?'

" 'O yes, yes. That 's my mother's writing; I know that 's my mother's writing.'

" 'Are you sure about your being that lost son?' asked the president. 'I would not like to give you this letter until you prove your identity,' half smiling.

"He could scarcely wait to read the letter, he was so overjoyed. But he produced another letter that he had received twenty years before from Scotland, in answer to a letter of inquiry he had written concerning us.

" 'Two hours,' said he, 'will not pass before I write to my mother.' He first thought he would come to me at once. But this cold climate, he thinks, would be too severe for his wife and children. Then, his business is there, and he wants me to go to him."

Then, taking from her hand-satchel a picture, she gave it to Mrs. Thomas, saying, "You may like to see how he looks."

"O, your son and his family. He is a noble-looking man, somewhat like our city mayor."

"Then he sent me a picture of himself taken a year after leaving home, and it looks just as he did when he left."

"So there can be no doubt that he is your lost boy."

"Ah, none at all. And he sent a letter, too, yellow with age now, that I wrote to him in London, bearing the date and my own signature. I could not mistake that. Ah, I know he 's my Aleck."

When Mrs. MacArthur had gone, little Edith, who

had heard them talking about the death of that good woman's husband, and of his noble Christian character, came up softly beside her mother, and said, "Mamma, where is he now?"

"He is in heaven, dear, for he was a good man."

"Is he in God's parlor?"

"Yes, darling, I think he is in God's parlor," meaning that she thought he had gained an abundant entrance.

During that month, a great delegated ecclesiastical body was in session in a distant city. Men from almost every nation were assembled in council to deliberate for the spread of the kingdom. They were there from Africa, from China and Japan, from India and Malaysia, from Argentina and Mexico, from Germany, Scandinavia, Italy, and Bulgaria. And they sat down together, the white and the black, the brown and the yellow, all in one holy convocation.

It was Sunday afternoon, and one and another were uttering their heart experience in words of consolation and cheer. At length an earnest, pleasant-faced man, seated on the platform, arose.

"We came here," said he, "hoping and praying that the Church would send more help to India. We have been disappointed in not getting what we ask. At first I thought that I should return at once, for I felt that there was nothing now to keep me here. And I came to this place this afternoon, wondering what message I should take back to my people. I could not take the help they wanted. What should I carry to them? Since I have waited here, I have heard it from the lips of another. It is this: 'The Lord of hosts

is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.' And that is the best that I could take to them. Though all else fail, if the Lord of hosts is with us, we shall conquer. I shall return to Calcutta strong in this assurance."

While he spoke, just below him, in the middle row of seats, with earnest face uplifted toward him, sat a young man. Often since the good Dr. Powers had presented the needs of the Calcutta school in the little parsonage eighteen months before had his thoughts turned with some hesitancy, and yet longing, to work in India. And he had come to the great assembly feeling that before he left it his way would be made plain. And as he sat there now, pale and thoughtful, there came into his heart an unutterable yearning to give his life, if that were asked, to the upbuilding of the Calcutta school.

As soon as possible after the benediction, Mr. Thomas, pushing his way to where Dr. Powers was leaving the auditorium, begged the privilege of seeing him in his room in the hotel.

"Is it visionary," he asked of the doctor, when they were once seated, "to think that a theological school may be established in Calcutta?"

"No, indeed, it is not. As soon as we have a good revival there it can be done."

"How long would it be before such a school could be undertaken?"

"Within six months," was the answer. "I can tell better when I return to India, and see what has developed since I left. That man of whom I spoke, MacArthur, is capable of helping us magnificently."

And what further passed between those two men, as they talked of the needs of their beloved Zion and the promise of her glad morning, "the Lord of hosts" doth know.

The next Sunday, when his people heard Mr. Thomas preach, they thought they "discerned the unmistakable power of a new devotion."

Chapter XII

A Woman of Many Concerns

It was hot, literally hot; at least, it seemed so, when one stepped on the smooth pavement, and felt it burn through the soles of his shoes. Then the weather observer, in the breeze on the top of a five-story brick, could not coax his thermometer to register lower than 101½ degrees, while in the offices along the streets below many a record was made of 104 degrees.

Difficult as had been the task that sweltering afternoon, Mrs. Crowell had finished the writing of the twenty district letters that must be sent out for the collection of the last quarter's remittance to the foreign field. And now, that the letters might be off without delay, she was about to carry them to the post-office.

"This is just awful!" said a neighbor, popping her head out from a side window in the next house.

"It is very warm."

"I should think it was! If it does n't let up before long, I shall die."

She was one of those women of extremes, with whom the weather was either "awful" or "divine."

"How is your husband? I noticed that he was home again."

"O, he 's not a bit well, Mrs. Crowell; and he 's out of work, too. Even the best of us do n't know what will happen in a year. It 's dreadful!"

Just then her husband called, and she drew her head in the window.

Mrs. Crowell, leaving her little mischievous four-year-old Nellie in care of the child's grandmother, went on her errand to the post-office.

During her mother's absence, Nellie was left to roam at will about the yard. Her grandmother did not think of her committing any depredations upon the neighbor's premises. So, while the child was busy gathering grasses and white-clover blossoms, her guardian sat in the parlor and read.

She supposed all was going well, until she heard voices outside. Mrs. Crowell had returned; and she was being addressed by her neighbor from the vicinity of a flowering bush that grew between the two yards, so exactly on the line between them that no one could tell with certainty to which one it belonged.

"Mrs. Crowell!" said her neighbor, who evidently was not in the serenest mood.

As Mrs. Crowell advanced toward the end of the porch, her eyes beheld the mutilated bush and her neighbor vigorously snatching up the twigs that some ruthless little hand had scattered in the grass.

"Mrs. Crowell, my mother says this bush has lovely flowers on it. And now, see what your child has done!"

"I am sorry," said Mrs. Crowell. "I did not know that she had done it, and I am very sorry."

Then that neighbor's mother appeared, and their comments upon the unkempt state of Mrs. Crowell's yard not being the most agreeable and complimentary, the latter woman walked quietly away. To speak the

truth, the condition of the side lawn at that moment was very shocking to sensitive nerves. For Nellie, in her effort to amuse herself, had brought out into the shade between the two houses an almost endless variety of wooden boxes and toys.

"I never saw such a yard!" said one of the women. "I always took some pride in keeping mine in order."

"Yes, indeed!" said the other. "This looks dreadful!" And she snatched up a few more of the twigs that had been plucked from the aforesaid bush.

By this time Mrs. Crowell was out of hearing, for her own spirits were considerably perturbed. And it was not long after that she was out on her side porch commanding Nellie with a vigor not often assumed, until the child had gathered up every one of the offending toys and boxes. Mrs. Crowell herself could not have denied that she was venting upon the head of the child, in that unsanctified moment, her spite against her neighbor. For what can be more exasperating, in a small way, to an ambitious housewife, than to be openly rebuked by a neighbor for a lack of order and thrift? Even the most pious will, at such times, be possessed of feelings not altogether religious.

"I suppose I ought to be able to endure that much," she soliloquized, "for the sake of the heathen. If I had not been away from home with those district letters, my lawn would not have been in such a plight; and that bush would now be standing out in all the wondrous beauty which they claim it possessed. But I think I can bear it."

Yes, patience, woman! We know how thy heart aches sometimes because of hasty actions; and how

thou dost feel, at times, that thou art losing thy sweet womanliness, which it is thy right to have, because of the crowding demands of outside work; and how thou wouldst, sometimes, gladly flie thee to a quiet spot, where thou couldst live with thy child and be at peace. But, then, there is the whole pleading world lying in wickedness, and there are so few who hear its cry. It may be, tired mother, that the Lord will some time make it up to thee. Courage, weary one; "the morning cometh." God grant it be not long!

Having finished the superintendence of her present task, Mrs. Crowell went into the house, to find, if possible, a little relief from the overpowering heat of the afternoon sun. She was weary. The extreme temperature would have been sufficient to unnerve almost any woman. Add to that the exertion of enforced correspondence, the hurried trip through the hot streets to the office, and, to cap all, that ill-humored scene at the bush, and you have a case warranting the weariness of the woman in question. Nor did it tend to alleviate her condition when her husband, after a most trying day in the office, returned at night an hour late for dinner.

"Whew! isn't this blazing hot!" said he, sitting down by the window, in the vain search for a breeze.

"Slightly warm," said his wife, with all the calmness she could command.

"You would have thought it slightly warm if you had been down in the office all the afternoon, with the thermometer registering 103 degrees."

"Yes, I found it warmer than I supposed when I was out this afternoon."

"You! Where on earth have you been, out in this scandalous heat?'

"I simply went to the post-office."

"Good gracious! What 's Uncle Sam worth, if he can't carry your mail for you?'

"But I was in a hurry. I did not dare wait for the postman to carry those letters."

"Ha, ha!" and Mr. Crowell threw back his head in derision of his wife's, as he thought, senseless haste. "I hope you put a special delivery stamp on each envelope; for in such benign weather as we are having these days everything ought to be stormed through with the speed of a tornado!"

"Well, I am not that foolish."

"Thank my fortunate stars!"

Dinner at length over, and it being too warm in the library for anything literary, they sat for a couple of hours to rest on the front porch. They were both too tired to be animated in conversation; so they talked or were silent as the spirit moved, neither one making any particular effort to be agreeable.

"My faith is at the zero point," observed Mrs. Crowell, after an unusually protracted silence.

"You are fortunate, if it is that high," was the rather melancholy rejoinder.

"Yours, then, is twenty degrees below, I take it," said she. "When I came from the Convention two months ago, I thought that I should have every woman on the district a member of the society. Now, I do n't feel that I shall have one."

"You won't be a member yourself, if you 're not careful."

"No, I shall be a fit subject for missionary effort."

By that time they were both laughing, and felt better.

"O, say, by way of refreshment, was there any of that watermelon left from dinner?"

"Plenty of it," said she.

"Well, let 's have some. Where is it?"

"In the refrigerator."

"All right, I 'll carry it to the side porch, while you get the dishes."

Presently he returned with the half of a huge melon, which he placed upon a little table that stood on the porch. Then, his wife coming out with plates and spoons and a lamp, they both sat down to regale themselves with large slices of the luscious red fruit.

Mr. Crowell was crunching the melon with the keen delight of one of his sable brethren who swept the office of a morning. As Mrs. Crowell paused between mouthfuls, she was telling her husband of the horrors reported concerning a certain so-called haunted house, that stood in a deserted spot a few blocks away at the foot of the street. In a voice of subdued terror befitting the content of her story, she told of the weird sounds and ghastly sights that had been reported by people living in the neighborhood of the before-mentioned house.

By this time it was ten o'clock. All was dark and still, save for the low sound of their voices and the dim light from the lamp on the little table. Indeed, to Mrs. Crowell herself it seemed rather owlish to be out there when all the neighbors had gone to bed. Still she talked on, while he bit away on the crisp melon.

But, crack! suddenly, from an overhanging tree, came a nut, with startling distinctness, down upon the tin roof over their heads; and it went rattling along, until it popped over onto the ground.

"Shades of our fathers!" exclaimed Mr. Crowell, "what ails that tree to be rattling its nuts down on that tin roof, enough to scare the wits out of a man!"

Smiling a little at each other's fright, they kept on with the melon and the story of the haunted house. They were becoming somewhat accustomed to the rolling of the nuts, when, suddenly again, out of the darkness and the stillness, from off that dreadful tin roof dropped a black cat; and it came thump down under a shelf near their feet.

"Great Cæsar's ghost!" emphatically ejaculated the astonished Mr. Crowell. "What sort of a Pandora's box do you keep up there, I should like to know! I really believe this is that haunted house, of whose hob-goblins you have just now given such a thrilling account." And the yellow eyes of the black offender gleamed at them from the dark corner of the porch.

"I have had enough of this," said the nervous little woman. "I move a speedy adjournment to the shelter of the kitchen;" whither, seizing her chair and plate, she fled, with a feeling that all the spooks in her grandmother's garret were after her. Her husband quickly followed.

"There! let the nuts and the cats fall!" And he gave the key a vigorous turn in the door.

That summer the scorching heat of August was prolonged, until, in many cases, man's life became a weariness unto him. But at last the strength of the

all-conquering sun himself began to fail. And men breathed more freely.

Two months of comfortable existence, and chill November's winds began to blow. On one of these dreary days, while Mr. Crowell, with a little time after lunch for reading the papers, sat thus employed in his easy chair before the fire, his trim wife, with jacket and hat, came bustling into the room.

"Whither bound?" said he.

"I want to call on Mrs. Harwood. She has not been out to our meeting in three months. I must find out what is the trouble."

"I shall soon go myself. What about Nellie?"

"Do not stay a minute for her. When you wish to go, call mother down stairs. She will stay with Nellie until I return." And with a quick turn of the knob, she was off.

"Ting-a-ling-ling," rang the door-bell, just as Mrs. Crowell whisked around the corner.

"She has just gone," said her husband to the pleasant woman who stood at the door.

"O, I am sorry that I did not come earlier," said Mrs. Deering. "But I can leave my message with you;" as, at his invitation, she stepped into the parlor. "I will not detain you long. Mrs. Crowell wished me to send her this list of names; but, as I was near, I thought I would bring it myself."

"What list is it?"

"The names of the members of the Almond Street Missionary Society. You don't know how grateful we are to Mrs. Crowell for her help."

"Well, I don't understand you," said Mr. Crowell.

"O, what have I done?" thought she in alarm. For it had not occurred to her that Mrs. Crowell might choose to keep her own counsel. But, supposing her to be a dutiful wife, who always reported with promptness her every transaction to her husband, Mrs. Deering thought she might speak to Mr. Crowell with all safety of his wife's connection with Almond Street.

"What has she to do with the names of the Missionary Society?" asked he.

"Why, she 's—she 's our president," not knowing what better to do than to tell the exact fact.

"Your president? She must be crazy!" was Mr. Crowell's astonished observation upon his wife's hitherto concealed venture.

"But you do n't know how much we need her."

"I know that she must not be president of that society. Why could not you become the president, yourself?"

"No, really, I could not. I am the treasurer now. I do all my own work, and have a large family. I have all I can do."

"You will have to find some one, then. Mrs. Crowell is already president of the Missionary Society at Fayette Park, and is secretary of the whole of this district; and for her to take the lead over at Almond Street would be altogether too much. I never can give my consent."

"Now, do not do anything to upset us," said Mrs. Deering, as she rose to go.

"No, I want to set you up," said he. "Your local society ought to be able to furnish a president without compelling the district secretary to become one."

And Mrs. Deering walked down the steps with the uncomfortable feeling of one who has overturned her own plans.

"Those heathen women!" said Mr. Crowell, shutting the door with emphasis. "I almost wish I had never heard of them. They nearly drive me wild. Mrs. Crowell ought to be here this minute to go with me to the office, and help with those books. But, what with all these outside engagements, the care of Nellie and the house, the writing of her own journal and her daughter's biography, she has not much time left for me and my work."

"Good-bye, sweetheart," kissing his little Nellie. And, waving his hand toward her as she stood with her blue-eyed doll in the window, he dashed down the steps, and hurried along the street to the car, forgetting the while that between his club meetings, his newspapers, his books and frequent runs over the State, he had left a very small remnant of time for his wife's plans.

"She 'll have a bit of my advice, to-night," thought he, as he took his seat in the warm car.

And then he let the "heathen women" drop, and was absorbed in his own business plans. So completely absorbed was he during the afternoon, and so delighted was he at night to see his cheery wife opposite him as they sat down to a carefully-prepared dinner, that he entirely forgot his previous denunciations; and when, later in the evening, he did express his disapproval of her unreasonable labors in behalf of the missionary cause, she laughed so merrily that it took all the force from his argument.

"But don't go over to Almond Street again," he insisted. "Write a letter, and tell them you can't come."

"But there were nine ladies out at our last meeting," answered the plucky Mrs. Crowell. "And some of them were there because I wrote cards to them to come."

"How long have you been the president at Almond Street?"

"Three months," said she.

"Three months! You certainly are crazy," said he. "You would make a tiptop subject for a caricaturist. I should like to see one take you in hand. Your back would be laden with packages labeled for your various occupations. I can see you, now, stooping under the weight of your load. The huge bundles that project in all directions from your bent shoulders are marked on this wise: 'President of Almond Street Auxiliary,' 'President of Fayette Park Society,' 'Secretary of the District,' 'Official Visitor,' 'Housekeeper,' 'Guardian,' 'Mother,' 'Biographer,' 'Journalist,' 'Associate Bookkeeper,' etc."

And they both laughed. She listened, periodically, to these outbursts from her husband; and then, when he was absorbed in his business, quietly went about hers.

So she did this time. And every month during the winter she met with the little band of half-disheartened women at Almond Street.

When, however, she felt that they could do without her, and that consideration for her own health compelled a change, she told them that she must give up

meeting with them regularly, but that she would come over occasionally when she could be of especial help.

"Won't you wait a minute?" asked Mrs. Deering at the close of the last visit; and after the others had gone, the two sat down together.

"I know we can not ask you to stay with us longer," she began. "But it is so hard to know what to do, with the pastor and his wife opposed to us. I have sometimes thought we would have to give up the society."

"But what about the orphan?"

"O, we never could give her up. My brothers and I would support her. She was named for my mother," said she, with trembling lip. "I do not know how it is; but, if any one is ever called to work for foreign missions at home, I think I was."

"I do not doubt it," replied Mrs. Crowell, warmly.

Notwithstanding the slight diminution of responsibility by the relinquishment of the Almond Street work, Mrs. Crowell sometimes felt herself near the breaking point. One source of annoyance was the fact that her once excellent memory, being cumbered by many details, was losing a little of its accuracy; and she sometimes declared that she believed herself never intended for the multifarious work she was doing. Some one simple occupation she might carry through with success; but this dealing with details was beyond her powers.

Yet after each period of doubt she always took courage, and, starting out afresh, determined to succeed in spite of obstacles.

One afternoon, however, again compelled to leave

her husband, while she hurried to an early committee meeting of the ladies of the city, she ran quickly down the steps. But no sooner had her feet touched the snowy walk, than she discovered that she had forgotten her rubbers. Back she went with all speed to the house. Having protected her feet against the inroads of the cold snow, she again went forth. A few yards down the street, and she had need of a handkerchief, which, to her dismay, she remembered leaving on the dresser. Another swift return to the house brought Mr. Crowell in great haste to the door.

"What now, my woman of many concerns?"

"O, my handkerchief! Do let me in, quick." And, rushing by him, she flew up stairs, only to discover, upon her return, that in taking up the handkerchief she had laid down her pencil and paper.

By this time he had collected his wits sufficiently to dart up the stairs for the missing articles himself.

"Thank you!" said she; then, turning before stepping from the porch: "Is my head on? Do tell me, quick!"

"Yes, your head 's on."

"Well, then, I 'm off. Good-bye."

Her husband, looking after her as she sped down the street, soliloquized thus: "If she does n't stop some of this heathenish business before long, she will lose her head one of these days, surely enough."

After this doleful reflection, watching the retreating figure of his wife with something of solicitude until she disappeared around the corner, he soon left for his office.

Chapter XIII

Sowing Bountifully

Again time rolls on. Once more the gold and the crimson flash from tree and vine. The advancing year, bringing the sheaves of the summer's harvest, and adorned with the brilliant and varied colors of autumnal foliage, though glad in gorgeous array and rejoicing in abundant fruitage, is yet solemn in nearness to the grave. This plentiful reaping after sowing, this magnificent apparel, this solemnity—all this splendid crowning of the year's toil is what tunes the poet's muse to richest singing, and makes the very earth wild with the song of glad triumph.

It is now one of these rich autumn days. The sun, from early morning, having poured out his wealth of light and cheer, is now low in the west. At this very moment Ward Hetherington walks quickly from the avenue up the steps to his own home. Before he reaches the house Alice has opened the door, and, lo! what changes since last the curtain lifted on their home! In her arms is a laughing baby girl, springing to meet its father; clinging to her skirts a chubby little boy; and next, Master Lewis holding to the hand of his sister Bertha.

Happy children! Happy father! Next to his Alice, they were the joy of his heart. For each he had a tender kiss. But if you could have observed closely, you would have seen that, although unconsciously to him-

self, the arm that embraced Bertha, their first-born, clung a little more tenderly than about the other children. She was very much like her father. She had his rich brown eyes, and would have hair as black.

"Now for a romp," said he; and, as was their custom on bright days, donning their hats, they chased him in and out among the trees on the lawn, Alice and the baby meanwhile sitting upon the steps laughing at the sport.

"Now, my little folks must come in to dinner." And they all filed into the dining-room.

Later, when Alice went up to put them to bed, she smiled at the unusual gravity of her four-year-old Lewis.

"Mamma," said he, "are the little girls in China real?" wishing to know, evidently, whether to believe in them as he did in "Jack Horner" and "Little Boy Blue."

"Yes," said his mother, "they are real."

Then, after a pause, he began his prayer: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Help papa and mamma and all of us. Help grandma and grandpa and all the dear ones, and the Indians, and everybody. Help the China good little girls; and help the little baby floatin' out on the China river; and help the two missionaries that saw the little hand a liftin' up.

> 'Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
> If I should die before I wake,
> I pray the Lord my soul to take.
> This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.'"

It was a world-embracing prayer. But when he was through he was seized with the spirit of emulation, and said: "Mamma, did n't I pray fine? And Bertha does n't know." She was not in the room at the time. He stood in awe of his sister's petitions, and gloried in the thought of having done as well as she. Very like children of a larger growth, he was standing on the street corners to be heard of men. But the Lord Jesus knows the desires of even the babes. So, as the little lips prayed, may He help not only the children of China, but those of all the world!

Presently Alice returned, and sat down beside her husband.

"Whose letter do you think I have here?" said he, holding up a well-filled envelope.

"O, is it for me?" she asked.

"It is for both of us; but from whom do you think?"

"I could not guess."

"It is from Thomas—a delightful, long letter from him. The dear old fellow!"

"I hope they are all well."

"Yes, they are well now—very well. But he had a struggle during his first year in Calcutta. The climate proved very trying to both of them. He came near breaking, and was obliged to seek relief in the mountains. His wife at the time was so low that it was thought scarcely possible to get her out of the city alive."

"Poor woman!" said Alice. "How hard that seems! And those two sweet children, how are they?"

"They have been well. Now he and his wife are perfectly restored, and they are all back again in Cal-

cutta, where he is planning the erection of a theological school, which was the dream of his heart when he left this country. He is certainly doing a great work there. Do you remember Mrs. MacArthur's son, of Calcutta?"

"Yes, indeed."

"It seems that when he made his first gift for the erection of the Boys' School, he promised that, if a suitable man could be found for the superintendence of the enterprise, he would contribute liberally toward the building of a theological school. When he greeted his old mother and met our Thomas there, and knew that it was he who had shown such kindness to her in her bereavement, he at once more than doubled what he had intended to give; and he has also been the means of securing from his friends various other sums for the work. Just now Thomas sees nothing in the way of the early establishment of an institution that shall put hundreds of well-equipped men into the needy fields all over India. He always was sanguine; but I never knew him to be raised to such a pitch of enthusiasm as he now seems to have reached."

"You do not mean that the school is now free from debt?"

"O no, not at all. There is still a liability of twenty-five thousand dollars, with fifteen hundred dollars annual interest to pay. But these contributions of MacArthur and others enable the authorities to launch the new enterprise without additional incumbrance upon the property."

"Then, Mr. Thomas may not find the way all smooth before him yet."

"O, certainly not. He admits that there will be times when it will cost heroic effort to raise the usual interest on the original debt. But he is so overjoyed at the realization of the dream that carried him to India, that he forgets the difficulties just ahead of him."

"He has truly done a marvelous work," said Alice. "And yet, when he went to India, the people of his Church thought he ought not to go. They could scarcely give him up, and said it would be a calamity to them, and that he was making a great mistake."

"On the contrary," said Ward, "the Church has not lost a particle by his going. His successor has helped to continue the Church's initial character of loyalty, liberality, and spiritual power. And think how much more he has done in Calcutta during the last three years than he could have accomplished here!"

"I suppose," said Alice, "that the work in this country is never allowed to suffer, when men are taken for the mission fields."

"It seems so," said he. "It is a verification of the promise of reaping after bountiful sowing."

"That is so. I had not thought to put it that way. But when a Church gives largely of her men and money for the spread of the kingdom, she receives largely in return."

"And she receives more than she gives," added Ward. "If she would only test the promises, there is no measuring the richness of the blessing that she would enjoy. But, my dear, I have another opportunity for a practical application of this principle of sowing and reaping."

"What is it? Let me hear."

"You remember that transaction of which I spoke the other day?"

"Yes."

"Well, it has netted me five thousand dollars."

"That is better than you expected, is it not?"

"Considerably better. I should have been very well pleased with half that sum. There was one while that I did not know whether or not I should even clear myself. So that I am at least five thousand dollars better off from this transaction than I thought I should be a few weeks ago."

"What will you do with that sum?"

"I suppose you know about what I will do with it."

"I can guess. I know what I wish you would do with it. I thought this very morning that I myself could easily make use of about that amount."

A vigorous ring of the door-bell! Cousin Charles Clarke was ushered into the parlor. A fine-looking, dark-haired man, short of stature, generous though somewhat wavering in disposition, a striking figure in social circles was this Cousin Charles. A very shrewd business man, also, was he. And others often found him a wise counselor in matters financial.

He was a frequent caller at the home of the Hetheringtons, for Alice was his favorite cousin; and when he found himself falling into one of his despondent spells, he went over to have her cheer him up. An hour of animated conversation with Alice was a cure for the worst attack.

"It is n't another bachelor mood this time, Alice," said he, as he dropped into a chair. "I have n't come

to get advice, but to give it. This man Ward needs a little watching now and then."

"Out with your advice, then," said Ward. "What is it? I can not bear suspense."

"I understand you 've had a streak of luck; made five thousand dollars. None of my business, eh? I beg you to forgive me if you do think it none of my business. I do not want to pry into your affairs; but I do want to help you invest that money well. You know I 'm no novice in financial transactions."

"Certainly. I shall be grateful for any help you can give toward the best investment of that money."

"Very well, then, I have a place for it exactly. Several of our wealthiest men are investing heavily out in Vineland Park. I have my eye this minute on the most eligible piece of property there, and have the refusal of it for three days. It is a large tract, and your five thousand dollars will just do. The city is pushing that way; and I am confident that in twelve months you can double your money, and have a good piece of land left for further increase."

"That looks plausible," said Ward.

"Will you go out with me and look at it? It 's most beautiful land. It was a large vineyard formerly, and has but recently been open for sale. Anywhere along its gentle slopes, you have a splendid view of the river; and this spot that I have chosen for you is the most charming. You ought to snap at the chance."

"Well, I will go with you to-morrow, if you like."

"And now, Alice, do n't you let him give that money away. That 's what he 'd like to do, no doubt. Even if you want to shower your gifts upon the heathen,"

turning to Ward, "do n't you see that you could do as much for them by waiting a year? And, then, you would have a nest-egg left for yourself."

"O, but you are not going?" said Alice, as he arose from his chair.

"Yes, I must."

"But before you go, let me tell you that we have had a good long letter from Mr. Thomas."

"Mr. Thomas!" ejaculated Charles. "That was the craziest move he ever made, his going to India to bury himself among the heathen. But I must go. The club meets to-night, and I only had time to administer this bit of counsel, which I hope your good man will heed." And with a hasty adieu, he was off.

"I wish that good-hearted fellow knew his possibilities," said Alice.

"Yes, indeed. He holds an enviable position among the business men of this city. If he would work as heartily in some really noble undertaking as he does in money-making schemes, he would do something worthy."

"If he would only marry some wise girl," said she, "and settle down in his own home, it would help him. But I doubt if he ever will. He dislikes responsibility. He is too free and easy. He wants to get up and go whenever he pleases, without having to consider a wife. I have almost lost faith in his being anything but my moody bachelor cousin."

"But to return to that money, dear," said Ward. "What did you think we should do with it?" And he looked confidingly into the face of his loyal wife.

"I want to tell you, Ward, my heart was stirred this morning as I read of the providential openings for us in India. I would that I had millions to give. And to think that, in the face of these opportunities, Christ's disciples can withhold his silver and gold! The paper came this morning, so probably you have not read it."

"No, I have not."

"It seems that the three Protected Native States in India, that were so providentially opened to mission work a few years ago, and where a good beginning was made, have need of large re-enforcements. The opportunities are most urgent in all of these States; but my thought was fixed upon Bastar in the south. A call is made for three thousand dollars to extend the work of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society there. And if you add to our sum the thousand dollars that father said I should have from the sale of his Westhill property, there would be another three thousand dollars to put native preachers to work in that State."

"O Alice, think of our putting that sum of the Lord's money in a little property here in this city, when doors like that are open before us! I could never do it. I should not hope to realize a dollar on it. And if I should realize thousands, it would not compensate for these lost opportunities."

"Indeed, it would not," said his wife.

"Well, my dear, then if you say so, we will make this investment at once, and watch for the coming of the kingdom in Bastar."

The next morning Ward said to Alice: "How would you like to take the children for a ride out to Vineland

Park? I must keep my engagement with Charles, though, as I knew full well last night, it will do no good for me to see that property. But you and the children come, and we will enjoy the carriage-ride in this bracing autumn air."

So when Mr. Clarke ran up the steps at nine o'clock, the little Hetheringtons were clapping their hands with delight at the prospect of a ride with Cousin Charles. For he knew how to make it very merry for the little folks, as well as very entertaining for the older ones.

It was a day to make the heart glad, a day full of sunlight and the warmth of autumnal foliage. The spirited horses whirled them up the avenue until the roses were in their cheeks and laughter upon their lips. A ride of twenty minutes brought them to the park, in full view of the river.

"What do you think of this?" asked Charles. "Is n't this superb?"

"This is an Eden spot, indeed," said Alice, whose soul was attuned to nature's harmonies. "I did not think that there was so picturesque a place near this city. Why does the owner sell it?"

"He wishes to dispose of it, that he may go to friends in Australia. He has put the price low, so that it will sell quickly. You 're not likely to do better anywhere," turning to Ward.

"Without doubt, this is very valuable property. From any reasonable standpoint, I should say it was the best I had seen."

"Of course, you 'll take it."

"Well, after you were in last night I learned of an

opportunity to invest elsewhere, that I think would prove more to my satisfaction."

"Very well, just as you say. It 's all right, so long as you invest. It really makes me ache to see a man of your wealth squandering it on those wretched Orientals. To see your devotion to missionary work, one would take you to be a full-fledged preacher. If you were, you might, with seeming propriety, bestow your money as you do. But being a business man, you owe it to Alice to accumulate wealth. If you make an honest effort, you may some day be at the tiptop among moneyed men in this city. Shall I tell Mr. Carlyle's agent not to hold it longer for you?"

"If you will. But we want to thank you for bringing us to see this lovely spot. I shall watch its development with interest. Doubtless, some day, this will be a very handsome part of our city."

As they wheeled away, Alice cast one lingering look back at the old vineyard, and the stretch of river peeping up through the crimson-robed trees. But her heart was in far-away Bastar, with its wild natives crouching in dense jungles, and fierce animals infesting its forests. And by faith she could see the "little child" of prophecy leading them until all the inhabitants of that native State should come forth "clothed and in their right mind." And she very much wanted a part in bringing about that glorious transformation. She shine as the wife of the richest man in the city! Such an ambition had never entered her mind. And in view of the exalted privileges in the kingdom of her Lord, how any Christian woman could cherish such an ambition she could not understand.

But Her Heart was in Far-Away Bastar

Ward and Alice, as they had planned, immediately investing their money in the Bastar Mission, eagerly awaited tidings of bountiful returns.

A few weeks after this, Charles called again to see his cousins; and finding them seated cozily before the grate, he drew his chair beside them for a chat.

"Well, have you invested that money?"

"Yes, indeed," said Ward, "I believe I have made the best investment of my life."

"Good! that 's good!" Where did you invest, if I may ask?"

"In India," was the reply.

"In India? What do you mean?" not thinking for a moment what kind of an investment he had probably made. "Is there opportunity to invest to advantage in that land?"

"Splendid opportunities! Never saw better. High rate of interest, large returns!"

"Well, well, let 's hear about it."

Then he told him.

"That 's ahead of anything I ever heard," said Charles, when he had finished. "I might have known you would do it; but I confess I shall have to grow in grace somewhat before I can follow your example."

"Why not try it with the three hundred dollars you banked to-day?"

"O no, I could n't do that. I can better trust the National with that little sum. India is too far away. I want to see the increase. But say, Ward, if you do n't stop, you 'll give yourself poor."

"Why, man," said Ward, "this money is not mine. The silver and the gold are the Lord's, and he has

placed me steward over a little part of it. If Mrs. St. James could pay five hundred dollars for the lace on her daughter's fan, surely I can give five thousand dollars for the support of native workers in India, who will teach thousands of idolaters the way to the Lord Jesus Christ! I would rather have that little money that has been intrusted to me go on multiplying itself in saved souls during the generations, than to put away an amount of elaborate lace for the inspection of my descendants."

"Well, that 's so," said Charles. "I guess you 're right. We do n't think of a man's becoming poor when he buys costly raiment that will do nobody any good. But it is when he gives something that will really count toward making the world better that we begin to warn him against impending poverty. Here, Ward, take that," handing him a check for one hundred dollars, "add that much to your amount for native preachers. Maybe their work will atone for some of my indifference."

After Charles had gone, Ward said to his wife, "I do wish that impulsive fellow would ever learn his possibilities in intelligent and liberal giving. He is such a generous fellow. If he would only give to worthy objects! Rouse him a little, and he will do handsomely. But, then, likely he will do nothing of the kind again for two years. And those workers that his money supports now will have to be kept in the field another year by the gift of some one else."

Chapter XIV

Precious Seed

All day long, away in the country, several miles from the busy city, the leaves had been falling about the home of Jamie Latimer. But they were left lying very quietly, that autumn, by the feet that in other years had so often rustled through them. They looked so sad and lonely, Mrs. Latimer thought, as she stood by the bedroom window, beneath which the wind had blown them up in a heap against the house. She turned to look at Jamie, where he lay in the last ray of the setting sun. Suddenly, hearing a rustle of the leaves outside and a gentle rap at the door, she went into the hall.

"Please, Mrs. Latimer, mamma wants to know how Jamie is to-night."

And there, in the gathering shadows, with the golden ringlets falling about her white neck, stood the beautiful little daughter of her neighbor, Mrs. Hargrave. And the tears in the child's eyes showed that her mother was not the only one in her home grieving for Jamie.

"We hope he may be better in the morning," said the troubled woman, kissing her. "Thank you for coming." And little Christine walked softly from the farmhouse back to her own beautiful country home.

The twilight deepened. The stillness, save for the occasional bark of Jamie's dog outside, was unbroken.

Mr. Latimer, having finished the milking of the cows, the watering of the horses, and the feeding of the chickens, came in and sat down beside the boy. Such a change had come over the little face since noon that he staggered as he looked upon it.

"Are there flowers in heaven?" asked the pale and wasted child, as he looked up from his snowy bed.

"Yes," said Mr. Latimer, "there are flowers in heaven, beautiful flowers."

"And do n't they ever wither?"

"No, darling, they never wither."

"Well, then," said little Jamie, "when you and mamma and I go there, we won't want ever to come away, will we?"

The great-hearted farmer, after he had stooped to kiss the fading boy, quietly left the room. And as the shadows further deepened about that rural home, the good man and his wife, though they said nothing about it to each other, felt a cold and dreaded presence there. They knew too well what it meant.

That evening, as the mother sat by the bedside of the little sufferer, he suddenly turned toward her.

"Mamma, who 'll direct them?"

"Direct whom, my son?"

"Why, the angels."

"The Lord will direct them."

All through that night his mother and father and the beloved family physician watched over the sinking boy. At length morning dawned, the holy Sabbath morning. Jamie opened his eyes.

"It 's growing dark," said he. "You had better light the lamp."

Then his face brightened as, with beckoning gesture toward the window, he said: "Do n't you see them? Do n't you see them?"

"See what, darling?" said the stricken father.

"Why, the angels; there they are," still beckoning as the heavenly ministrants seemed coming near to him.

Then he turned his face to another part of the room; and it was as if his eyes had pierced the veil; for such a heavenly radiance broke upon his countenance that his mother thought he must have seen the Christ.

Then the good man at her side wept; and the boy, smiling as though his father's tears were not in harmony with the presence of angelic messengers, said, half reproachfully, "And papa's crying."

Yes, papa was crying. Dear man! He could not help it. But the courageous mother, because she had promised her boy that she would not weep, though her heart was breaking, braved it through; and she even sung, at his request, the first little song he had learned at her knee.

Here was her "little missionary," who had so faithfully gone in and out among the country homes, collecting money for the cause they loved so well. And now he was dying. What did it all mean? But at that moment something prompted her to speak, just before the little soul, bursting its cage, went back to the bosom of the Father.

"What shall I do with your pennies, Jamie dear? Shall I give them to the missionary cause?"

His face brightened as he said faintly, "Yes, do, mamma."

And he smiled, as she added, "Some one will then be working here in your stead while you are in heaven."

And, later in the day, people driving by toward the country church saw the father out among the fallen leaves by his grape arbor, weeping; for the shadow had fallen upon his home, and his little Jamie was gone. And some thought, as they saw him there, the lonely man, with his only child slipped away, that he must be crushed! But he was not. He knew where his boy was that morning; and he knew that some glad day he should meet him.

And when, two days later, the country people were again assembled in the little church to offer their tribute of love to the memory of the departed child, and their sympathy to the bereaved parents, all hearts throbbed with pity and eyes filled with tears, as their pastor conducted a brief and touching service before the little form was carried to its narrow grave.

As they stood about in groups, after coming from the church, one would say to another: "He was such a good boy! We shall miss him so!" A child with golden hair, stealing from her mother's side, stood where she could watch the sexton throw back the earth upon the coffin, while tears where streaming down her cheeks.

"Mamma," she said later, when they were walking away toward their home, "Mamma, why did God want to take Jamie?"

"I do not know, my child. Only I think he must have been through with him here, and wanted to take him to heaven to be with Jesus."

"I did n't want God to take my little playmate." And again Christine burst into tears.

"I know, daughter." And the mother wept, too.

Then, as they came near Mrs. Latimer's home, Mrs. Hargrave led her little girl from the grassy wayside into the road, for she could not bear the rustle of the autumn leaves beneath her child's feet.

Jamie was gone; yet he lived. For no one of the good people who gathered of a Sunday morning at Bloomingdale Church ever looked out upon the small, white shaft above Jamie's grave, without thinking of the fourteen coins left as so many seeds to grow up into the harvest of the kingdom.

And a goodly number of friends began to make possible that glorious harvest by additions to the meager fund. The missionary jug, with its pretty white ribbon, was sacredly kept by the mother to receive gifts from those who counted it a privilege to help fulfill the undeveloped life purpose of one of Christ's little ones.

What the mother, by earnest efforts among indifferent neighbors, had failed to do while Jamie was with her, the diminutive jug did, as it went its quiet round.

One day Alice Hetherington sat in Mrs. Fenton's parlor.

"Let me tell you about this," she said, holding up the little white-ribboned jug that, through friends, had found its way to the great city. And she told the story of Jamie's bequest.

As Mrs. Fenton listened, tears fell upon a bright coin she held in her hand. The story being ended, the coin, very like one of the original fourteen, slipped from her fingers into the jug—like in appearance, but

in value five hundred times as great. And it fell among the other coins with a friendly tinkle.

"Add this toward the harvest," she said.

As the little jug went its round, the story of the child was told to other friends; until one autumn day, just a year after Jamie left, it stood full upon Mrs. Latimer's mantel.

She had dreaded the return of that day, so full she knew it would be of thoughts of her boy. The days of the previous week, too, had been so hung with clouds and dreary with dripping rain, that her heart was heavy as she approached the anniversary of his death.

But the day dawned; and with it came a burst of sunlight that filled her soul with peace. And all through its hours, sky and earth were flooded with warmth and brightness.

At twilight the mother stood, as she had done the year before, by the bedroom window, looking out upon the brown leaves lying, as the wind had tossed them, against the house.

While she stood there, between her and the sunset danced a little golden head, as its owner, with her apron full of red apples, flitted by the gate on the way to her mother's home. Tender associations these—the brown leaves, the little golden head, and the death of her Jamie! Tender, but not painful, they seemed in the stillness of that autumn sunset. For was not there the precious jug with its increase of two hundred and fifteen fold, which should speedily represent her boy among the desolate ones of a heathen land?

While she stood there, her husband, coming softly in, took his stand beside her.

"Thinking about Jamie, dear?"

"Yes," she said, looking up, with tears in her eyes.

"Well, how does it seem to you now?"

"Brighter than it did, John."

And the glory from yonder sunset lighted her face.

"So it is with me, dear. The sunlight of the day must have been appointed for our comfort," said the farmer.

"I have thought so," replied his wife. "But now a word about Jamie."

"Well, my wife, what is it?" as she hesitated a little.

"Do you remember the secretary's reply when we wrote to know if he could make use of the money that Jamie left?"

"I don't remember just what he said."

"Let me read," said she, taking a letter from the dresser: " 'Those fourteen pennies ought certainly to be turned into ten-dollar bills for the cause of missions; but you should attend to it yourself. Experience teaches me that I can do better to come before the people, and ask them to give for Christ's sake. No other name, not even that of a little boy, substituted for the name of Jesus, will draw the money from the people. God bless you!' "

"And I think he is right," said Mr. Latimer, as his wife folded the letter.

"Indeed," said his wife, "I have fervently prayed that, through the child's voice, some may hear the Lord."

"I trust so," he said. "We shall see."

And then they turned from the window, and sat down together to their evening meal.

Chapter XV

A Prophecy

BEFORE daylight, one cold February morning, a loud ring of the bell brought the Hetheringtons in surprise to the front door.

"Good morning, Alice!" said a saucy voice outside.

"Why, Kate Clarke! I might have known it was you. No one else would have come at so unseasonable an hour. What on earth brought you here?"

"I brought myself, thank you," laughed Kate.

"But why did you come so early?"

"Charles said you wanted me to come early."

"But I did not mean you should come before I was up. I shall not go shopping before the stores are open."

"Well, I 'm here now, anyhow. You can go back, and finish your sleep if you like. I can make myself comfortable. Just give me that new book, and I do n't care whether you speak till noon."

"But you have not had your breakfast."

"Why, no, of course not! You do n't think that I would prowl around in a cold, dark kitchen for the sake of breakfast. There would have been a row surely enough if I had called the cook. I came near having one with Josh. I found I was n't quite venturesome enough to walk over alone, so I asked him to come with me. He felt like swearing all the way over."

"Old black Josh is more accommodating than I thought he would be."

"O, Josh and I are good friends. He always does what I ask."

"Well, I will leave you with that book until breakfast," said Alice. And she went up-stairs to adjust her hastily-arranged toilet.

"What a girl that Kate is!" said Ward, as Alice came into the room.

"Yes; but she will make a woman sometime. She is one of the keenest girls I ever saw. She does not have to meditate long upon a subject to determine her degree of knowledge. She knows, or she does not know, at once. She never has to resort to a long process of reasoning. Her mental operations are quick. So, you give her a little time, and she will come out all right."

"I am not so sure," said he, doubtfully. "I sometimes fear she will never become sober. A girl at sixteen is old enough to be considerate, and ought to have some womanly ways."

"You know she is the youngest of the family, and they have almost spoiled her," said Alice.

"I should say they had quite spoiled her!" with more asperity than he usually evinced.

"O, I think you are too hard on Kate. You forget that I was once rollicking myself."

"You never were as bad as she."

"I never went as far as she, to be sure: but I was not always as sedate, even, as I am now."

"O, well; I will let you and Kate work it out. I do not need to bother myself. You are equal to the

task, if any one is. If you succeed with her, you will deserve credit."

"As incorrigible as you think she is, you admit that I could not get along without her. I must have some one to come in and stay with the children when I am out. I would not feel right to leave such a flock of them with the kitchen girl. Though Kate is not a decided success with children, she is a cousin; and that fact gives an air of propriety to the arrangement."

"I should n't think she was a success! If I were that boy of mine, and some one were to attempt to control me as she does him, it would raise the very Evil One himself!"

"Why, Ward Hetherington! I am ashamed of you," laughed his wife.

Now, it happened that that boy of theirs was not noted for uniform decorous behavior. He was not a model of goodness, even for a lad of six years. His disposition was not angelic. Indeed, he was very like his "Aunt Kate," as the children called their mother's cousin. And so it not infrequently happened that there was a clashing of swords when the two dispositions met; for Kate, be it remembered, though of generous impulses, was very impetuous, and often, upon slight provocation, lost her temper. But with all her shortcomings she was a very useful individual. She really loved the children, and was conscientious in every detail of her care for them; so that when Mrs. Hetherington was out, she felt quite complacent with regard to them, knowing that, barring a few episodes of the kind referred to, all would go well.

When Alice had finished her own toilet, she proceeded to dress the children. This being accomplished, the four little Hetheringtons, trooping down stairs, entered the library where Kate sat reading. They had not known that she was there.

"O, here is Aunt Kate!" and as the children went plunging and jumping and whirling toward her, a chorus of shouts and laughter filled the house; for Kate never did inspire the utmost propriety. She often brought them peanuts or popcorn; and whether the ovation was hers or the peanuts' was hard to say.

"Did you bring us anything?" went up a concert of voices.

"Yes, yes! Do keep still!"

"O, what is it?"

"Well, do wait, and you 'll see!" as she held four sacks above their heads.

"O, peanuts, peanuts! Hurrah for Aunt Kate!" shouted Master Lewis so lustily that Kate declared if he did not stop he would drive her crazy.

Then followed a general scramble after the coveted sacks. But Lewis so bubbled over with joy that he forgot to take his, and went spinning and jumping out into the back parlor until he had sufficiently worked off his effervescence to walk deliberately back and take Kate's gift.

Then, sitting down in the corner, he plied himself with such diligence to the eating of the peanuts that he was soon seated patronizingly beside his sister Bertha. And so skillfully did he put his plea that, had it not been for the interposition of Kate, he would have appropriated nearly the whole of his sister's supply.

Master Lewis, it may be remarked, was developing his individuality. And after his mother had left, to the consternation of Kate, who was not in her happiest mood that day, and who at any time very much preferred burying her head in a book to disciplining the lad, he began to give amazing evidence of such development.

"Why, Lewis Hetherington, what do you mean?" spoke up Kate. "You ought to be whipped!" For it was not conducive to her serenity of mind to see the contents of the dust pan scattered again to the four corners of the room. And the young offender was forcibly seized and planted in a chair, with the injunction to stay there fifteen minutes.

He was not seized so suddenly, however, but that he slipped Kate's book under the lounge.

While she went to work to gather again the particles of dust and bits of paper from the quarters whither the rebellious Lewis had flung them, he with meek submission was serving out his sentence. At length, after being put through a pointed catechism, he was released.

His next exploit, a few minutes later, while Kate had her back toward him, was to cut off the pretty curls from the head of Bertha's doll.

"O, Aunt Kate," said the little girl as she came up with her mutilated darling in her arms, "just see what Lewis did to my poor Nora." And her eyes filled with tears as she stroked the shorn head.

"Never mind, I 'll get you another," said Kate in her effort to comfort the tender-hearted little mother. Then she directed her attention to the boy.

"Now see here, Lewis; why did you do that?"

"I don't know."

"Well, you ought to know. I 'd like to shut you in the closet. You may sit in that chair now till I tell you to get up."

"No; I won't!" snapped out the little rebel.

"Now, you may sit there thirty minutes!"

He knew better than to say any more. And, quiet being for the time restored, Kate was about to resume her reading.

"Where did I put that book?" she said, as she began picking up papers and magazines to find it. "Lewis Hetherington, you know where that book is gone."

"What book, Aunt Kate?" he asked in apparent surprise.

"The book that I was reading. You know, you little rascal! I can tell by the green glint in your eye."

"Let me see if I can think," said he, meditatively.

"Well, you think quickly, or I 'll shake you."

"O, I know now where I saw it. I saw it under the lounge. Maybe you dropped it when you got up to put me in the chair."

"Maybe I did, you think? Lewis, look straight into my eyes!"

But about that time Lewis did not care to look straight into anybody's eyes; so he turned his back to Kate.

"Lewis, you put that book there, and you may get it."

"Now," said she, after he had returned it, "you

may sit in the chair ten minutes longer for that bit of deception."

Then she opened her book. But she had read only a page or two when the fertile mind of young Hetherington gave her further annoyance. She was startled from her reading by a sharp scream from the little baby sister who, in her play, had come near enough to the chair of the young prisoner to admit of his pinching her cheek. The frightened cry of the baby brought the nervous Kate to her feet so suddenly that she dropped her book to the floor, while she seized the young culprit and shook him most vigorously.

Then she was sorry she had done it. She bethought herself of how happily sometimes she had controlled him. She knew that the fault was her own in not succeeding that morning, for she had not used a single grain of tact. She determined to start anew; so she put her book away.

"Come, let 's play 'hide and seek,' " said she. "We 'll all hide, and let Bertha find us."

"Wait a minute," said that little woman from her quiet corner by the window; "I want you to see this," as she brought a little drawing for Aunt Kate's inspection. "See, here 's the house, and that 's a tree, and there 's the sun, and there 's the glory," pointing to the luminous rays. "Do you think I can be a real artist some day, Aunt Kate?"

"Maybe so, dear; but you play with the rest of us now. You can make better pictures after a little fun."

"Let me put away my pencil and paper." And

opening her child's desk, she carefully put them inside. "O, Aunt Kate," she said suddenly, as she looked out of the window into the air, white with briskly-bounding snowflakes, "the wood fairies must be playing snowball."

Then away they all scampered, up stairs and down, through the whole house, hiding in the most obscure corners, but not so obscure that they could not be found by the quick-witted Bertha. A half hour of rough-and-tumble tired Kate out, and she lay on the lounge a few minutes to rest.

Presently she heard a clumping noise, very indistinct at first, along the walk at the side of the house. Quietly gliding to the window, she sat looking steadily in the direction of the muffled sound. To her dismay she saw the obstreperous Lewis, crouching on his hands and knees as he stealthily approached. Very low on the walk he crept as he neared the window, where he feared she would see him. It was a very shrewd plan of his, and one most likely to carry. He knew that discovery meant defeat, for his mother had told him to stay in the house while she was gone; and Aunt Kate always did her best to carry out the letter of his mother's injunctions. Kate herself had never been required to obey; but she always declared that any children under her own control must do as their elders directed. So it was with some trepidation that Master Lewis approached that part of his journey lying underneath the window. Then was the critical point. If he could pass it in safety, success was assured. So, as he neared the decisive spot, he glanced up cautiously. But her

sharp eyes met his; and he just stood up and howled. Such a sudden and unexpected ending of his expedition was too much for so youthful an adventurer.

"I never saw such a child," said Kate, as she rushed through the kitchen.

"Dat boy 's 'mos' too much fo' you, shuah, Katie."

"We 'll see whether he 's too much for me." And she dashed after him with all speed. Soon she came in, leading by the hand a very much crestfallen little man; but as she was mentally showering anathemas upon his head, she suddenly thought of the turkey that was to be dressed for dinner.

"O, Ann, may I dress that turkey?"

"Yo' can't dress a tu'key, chil'."

"Yes, I can. I always do it at home; and I have done it for Mrs. Hetherington once or twice. It 's real fun."

Having obtained permission, she set to work in high spirits, for this was her favorite culinary task. She was no mean cook, anyway; and she had enough relish for the study of zoology to make fowl-dressing a special delight. The little Hetheringtons stood about the table taking lessons in anatomy. Their observations were most entertaining, both to the nimble worker at the table and to black Ann, who, being unexpectedly relieved of that part of her afternoon employment, felt disposed to stand by awhile and look on.

"What are those, Aunt Kate?" said Lewis.

"Those are little eggs, my man."

"Say we plant 'em, then maybe we 'll raise some turkeys."

Kate smiled. Ann nearly bent herself double.

By six o'clock, thanks to the enterprising Kate, a steaming turkey stood upon the table, when Mr. and Mrs. Hetherington returned.

Just before she left for home that night, Ward said, "Well, Kate, how went the battle to-day?"

"The less said about it, the better. It was one of those indecisive battles. If that boy of yours does n't make his way in the world, it won't be his fault. But Bertha! You have a treasure in her. If I were a prophet, I should venture on a wonderful career for that girl."

Just then, the child entering the parlor, the subject was dropped; but the father, drawing her to him, folded her closely in his arms, and looked yearningly into the dark, brown eyes as though he would read there a prophecy of the future; but a smile and a kiss were his only answer.

Chapter XVI

"Deader Than a Fossil"

After six years in India, Mr. Thomas was compelled to visit the home land in the interests of the Calcutta school. By his former associates his coming was hailed with delight, for they saw in it an opportunity to fan into flame the dull embers in their Churches. No one more heartily welcomed this occasion than Dr. Newton. In his sanguine expectation he saw the whole surrounding country, within a radius of fifty miles of the city, aglow; and he immediately set to work to arrange such a campaign as should make that autumn eventful. A prompt and vigorous correspondence secured the cordial support of all the preachers in that territory; and the dates for the various Churches being fixed, he awaited, with much assurance, the outcome of his plan.

But a few days before active operations began, his expectant mind was somewhat agitated by the receipt of two letters. One ran as follows:

"Yes, I would be glad to have Mr. Thomas for October 18th, for the missionary spirit here is deader than a fossilized mammal of the carboniferous age. Yesterday the Sunday-school collection for this cause was only thirty-one cents. Yours truly,

"Alonzo Palmer."

The other letter read thus:

"Your card came Saturday, and on the Sabbath I announced, as you requested, that Mr. Thomas would speak for us next Friday night. I was then informed that the young people had arranged for a *'butterfly pumpkin-pie social'* in the church that night; so I lifted my announcement, and told them I would write to you. Sympathizing with you in the deplorable lack of aggressive spirit among our people, I am,

"Yours truly, JOSEPH SMITHTON."

"A butterfly pumpkin-pie social! I never heard of the like," said Dr. Newton. "A butterfly pumpkin-pie social must crowd out a missionary meeting! So little do Christians appreciate the needs of this world."

That was not a very auspicious opening of the campaign! Undaunted, however, Dr. Newton determined to push it through; for if the other Churches were as dead as the two before-mentioned, was not the need the more positive?

At any rate, Mr. Thomas was sanguine of victory, and eagerly set out upon his tour. The very heavens, as though prophetic of success, that bright October day were bending in warmth above him.

His first stop was at Highland, a beautiful village some miles from the city.

"Well," said the pastor, as he and Mr. Thomas walked toward the church that night, "we ought to have a full house."

"I trust we shall," was the reply.

"I placed a large sign on the lawn in front of the church, and another in the post-office; and I have

announced this meeting in every public gathering for two weeks," remarked the pastor.

Arriving early at the place of worship, these two men of God awaited the looked-for crowd. At the appointed hour, Mr. Thomas arose to address them; and he spoke, not, indeed, to a full house, but to about fifty precious souls who cared enough about it to come out on that moonlight night and hear the story of the spread of the kingdom.

Said the pastor to Mr. Thomas, later: "It was not due to lack of advertising. Why, I went into a sister church a short time ago to hear one of their great workers from China; and do you know, there were just nine people present! Only nine in this flourishing town of Highland who would exert themselves enough to learn what the Lord is doing for that empire. The spirit of missions is dead here!"

"A part of our work, then, must be to bring it to life," was the reply.

Undismayed, Mr. Thomas pushed on to the next stronghold. It was a little country church up on the bluff, where the tumbled hills were robed with lindens and black walnuts. This proved even more formidable than Highland.

With one exception, the people were poor. That one man, Mr. Jimmerson, commanded wealth enough to buy out all his neighbors. And Dr. Newton had felt that, if Mr. Thomas could go there, he would reach the old man's heart. So he tried it; but do his best, he could not move the audience. Every one had his eyes on Mr. Jimmerson. He was the leading man in the community, and they looked for him to

lead in this case. But he sat unmoved, until Mr. Thomas, in the course of his remarks, taking from his pocket a shining silver dollar, held it up before the audience. Mr. Jimmerson's eye flashed, and he instinctively leaned forward, so accustomed was he to reach after the white metal. Eager was he to take it to himself; but when asked to give for the relief of others, his heart shut like a clam. But he reckoned himself liberal.

"Why," said he to Mr. Thomas as, with his handsome carriage, he brought him along the picturesque drive from the city to the chapel, "I give twenty dollars a year for the support of the Church; I think I do pretty well."

"How much of that five hundred and fifty dollars you say you cleared from those six acres of potatoes do you intend to give to the missionary cause?"

"O," he replied, "I don't believe in foreign missions. Why, every missionary that goes out is worth a hundred of those cannibals that eat 'im up;" believing, evidently, that these ferocious creatures line the shore of every heathen country, ready to gobble a herald of the gospel the minute he touches land.

After all, with his profound sympathy for the missionary, possibly, it was not so strange that this wealthy farmer should have withheld his gifts that Sabbath morning. Dead! "Deader than a fossil" was this steward of the Lord's money.

After such uncertain encounter up among the wooded hills, the enterprising Mr. Thomas made his next attempt at a church out on the rolling prairies; not where there was only one rich farmer, but several,

each with his hundreds of acres of unincumbered, fertile land. And as you rode by the broad fields of ripe corn, and saw the great herds of cattle grazing in the meadows, you could but think how easily these farmers might give to feed the perishing multitudes. To this wealthy community Mr. Thomas went. Sunday morning he stood before them—a church full of good country folk—to present his message.

"Ah," thought he, "these are noble-looking people;" as he singled out three or four fine appearing men. "That man, I know," he said to himself, "has a large heart. I shall expect a liberal offering."

With enthusiasm and a foretaste of victory already in his soul, he began his plea. Throughout his address he read in the faces of his hearers such an intelligent response that he was sure of their gifts. An easy conquest, he thought, was before him.

"How many of you," he said at length, "will give five dollars to have a part in this great work of saving the heathen world?" He confidently expected to see a dozen hands go up at once. To his utter astonishment, not one stirred.

Thinking that surely he must have been misunderstood, he asked again, "How many will give five dollars toward carrying the gospel to benighted people?" But there was no response.

"Well, if that is a little too high, how many will give four dollars?" Another pause.

"How many will give three dollars?" continued the courageous speaker. But still there was no answer.

"How many will give two dollars?" And so few and so feeble were the responses to his last request

that he left with a heavy heart; for he wondered if he had in any way failed to deliver the right message.

Not to reflect too deeply, however, upon the liberality of these wealthy farmers, let it be known that afterward the pastor, with the tact that a shepherd of his own flock sometimes has above even the most successful worker from abroad, went out among his people, and by individual appeals made up the amount apportioned to his charge.

Moreover, not to reflect too deeply upon the missionary's skill, be it said that the most of these farmers gave from personal regard for their pastor, not from love for a perishing world; for many of them positively disbelieved in any enterprise that reached beyond their own borders. But by heroic effort in collecting the small sums, the required amount could usually be raised.

That night our friend was entertained at the home of one of the parishioners whom he had addressed at the church. This man was a well-to-do farmer. Both he and his wife were staunch New Englanders by descent, and through economy and thrift had amassed a small fortune. With their only daughter they were living upon the accumulated results of years of toil. And who had better right to enjoy the fruit of their labor? Had they not by their own industry rightfully acquired all that they possessed?

But Mr. Thomas in his plea of the morning, among other pictures, had described the woe and sorrow of the child widows of India, and, as it appeared during his stay in that home of affluence, the mother heart of the farmer's wife was stirred to do something for

their relief. Evidently she was yielding a little before this plea.

"That was dreadful," she remarked to Mr. Thomas in the afternoon, "what you said about the little girls of India. I could n't get it out of my mind all day. I feel so sorry for them, I would be glad to sacrifice for the sake of helping them." And contemplating their forlorn condition, her face wore a most pitiable look.

Here, certainly, was an encouraging indication that his appeal had reached the heart of one rich woman—the crowning, thought he, of the day's work. And he rejoiced.

"I do feel so sorry for them," she continued, her good, honest face still picturing the sadness that was in her heart. She crossed the room to a drawer—crossed it slowly, as if pondering the importance of the step she was about to take—and he awaited with interest whatever gift it should be in her mind to offer. Taking from the drawer a coin, she turned her face again toward the one whose earnest pleading had so moved her with pity for India's blighted girlhood.

"I do sympathize with them so! I wish you would take this dollar to help them;" and she meekly dropped the coin into his hand. By its weight he knew at once that it was different from what she supposed, and at a glance he saw that she had handed him twenty times her intended amount.

"Do you wish to give all this?" he said.

"Why, certainly; I am willing to do at least that much."

"But this is a twenty-dollar goldpiece."

"O!" said she, with startled surprise; and at once her feigned meekness and sympathy vanished, and she was all alert to save the twenty-dollar goldpiece. There were fire in her eye and force in her step as she moved to the rescue.

Having taken it from him, she walked with energy back to the drawer whence she had brought it, where, much to the good lady's annoyance, the money fell unbidden from her hand, and struck with an aggravating jingle upon the pile of other coin. She tried to quiet the ringing, but it was too late; it had spoken, that portion of the Lord's money, and one of his messengers heard it as it seemed to plead for a corner somewhere in the vineyard. Possibly all of it should have been given that very day for the widows of India. And the unexpected noise and the shaking were the only protest that inanimate objects could make against a misappropriation of their powers.

Order, however, being restored to those rebellious coins, their owner selected one from among the number and quietly gave it to the missionary. Excusing herself to prepare supper, Mrs. Armstrong found it convenient just then to leave her guest to his own meditations.

Meanwhile she was troubled. Could you have seen her moving from her well-stored pantry to the table, and back again to the pantry, as she prepared the bounteous meal, you would have known that something was disturbing Mrs. Armstrong's mind. Every now and then she would stop as though she heard something, and then go on, only to stop again. It

was the jingling of that coin. She kept hearing it. And yet, she argued, she had given all that she intended to give. It was a mere accident that she took up the twenty dollars instead of the one, (was it, indeed, a mere accident?) and she did not know why she should change from her first intention. So she let it stand, although she had remarked to a friend but a short time before that she never had less than fifty or sixty dollars in the house.

The next morning, after a night's rest beneath the roof of these hospitable people—hospitable, indeed, as they always were to all who crossed their threshold, but, alas! very inhospitable to their many needy neighbors just over the sea—the persistent Mr. Thomas set out for the next place in his itinerary. This proved to be a mining town. The church was crowded with an enthusiastic and attentive audience. Students from the high school filled every available corner of the edifice. Boys sat along the edge of the platform, and one little fellow leaned against the opposite side of the pulpit desk. Even the pastor sat upon the altar rail.

On their way to the church, Mr. Thomas had said to him, "I shall ask for a collection from the people, shall I?" confidently expecting an affirmative answer.

"Well—well—a—well, I hardly think it wise. You see, our Church is n't very strong here, and if there are many people out, the most of them will be from other Churches. There are only six families in our Church, anyway; and they are pretty well pressed as it is. Then—well—then, they owe me seventy-three dollars."

"Aha!" thought the missionary as they entered the sanctuary, "they owe him seventy-three dollars, do they? Here is a new snag—a church full of responsive people, but the pastor unwilling to take a collection."

The service began. Mr. Thomas was in his happiest mood, and the people seemed in theirs. As the speaker went on, their interest and enthusiasm increased. So demonstrative listeners he had seldom addressed. He was raised to such a pitch of hope himself that he almost felt that the kingdom of heaven was coming at once. And he felt sure that, if he should ask again of the pastor for the privilege to take a collection, it would be granted. So when he leaned forward a second time to ask permission to have the baskets passed, what was his chagrin to meet once more the dubious shake of the head.

"O," thought Mr. Thomas in an unsanctified moment, "they owe him seventy-three dollars."

And he left that town with a sense of sorrow that one of the Lord's own heralds should have stopped the flow of treasure into His coffers.

At length he reached the last place on his tour. It was a county-seat—a proud and stately old town that boasted of existence before the war; and, indeed, in its present inhabitants it retained somewhat of the spirit of the former days. It had long been a noted suburb. In walking down its broad and shady streets, one saw on either hand venerable mansions set in extensive yards of rich green, variegated with flowers of many colors, and softened by the shadow of spreading trees; and on a sultry day many a sheltered

nook might lure the traveler to rest a little beneath its cooling shade.

But, somehow, the stranger felt an inhospitable breath upon his cheek the moment he entered the town; for the people seemed to shut themselves within their homes like feudal lords within their castles, and to look down with aristocratic coldness upon any unlucky denizen who fain would introduce a more democratic fashion.

So it came to pass that innovators had hard work of it; and in no department of activity did they more keenly feel the struggle than in the department of Church work; for the same domineering spirit of lordship attempted to rule in religious as in temporal affairs; and the modest society in Elm Street, as well as the more ostentatious Churches in the heart of the town, suffered under this unhappy influence.

It was Sunday morning of a charming day in late October. As he sat there before the exercises began, he looked out upon his audience.

There sat Messrs. Smiley, Sellers, and others of the officiary that had controlled that Church for the last twenty years. At the close of each year they rehearsed in the ears of Dr. Newton the qualifications of the man who should be sent as their pastor for the next twelve months; and each time the specified man failed to come, for he was nowhere to be found. "Don't send us an old man; he won't do," was one of their requests.

"And we can't have a man from over the border. We've had all we want from there as it is," they would say.

"He must n't have too many children," was another specification; "for the parsonage should be well kept."

"Send us an unmarried man," was their final request, "a good-looking, scholarly, eloquent preacher—one that can command the respect of the town."

These and similar specifications Dr. Newton heard with the utmost possible equanimity. They wanted a man that would flash and scintillate like a meteor, yet one with so little experience and self-assertion that these shrewd magnates could lead him whithersoever they would.

Fearing lest their former appeals may have been unavailing, these wary officials once came to him with this device: "Our present pastor is too good a man for this place. It is really an injustice to keep him on such a charge. We can't support him as he deserves. He really ought to have a thousand dollars, and we can't pay over eight hundred." And yet, when they had a worthy man at the latter sum, they could not pay him; for he was not good enough. Then their plea was for a twelve-hundred-dollar man; for they could easily raise that amount if they only had the right one. O, consistency!

And yet the present incumbent of Elm Street Church gave satisfaction to all his people except those irrepressible members of the officiary. He did not suit them, and doubtless, if truth were known, they did not suit him.

Mr. Thomas remembered very well how, over three years before, he had written a letter to Dr. Newton, telling him of the great need of pastor-teachers in India. There was one native in particular who was

begging to be given the privilege of entering a certain unevangelized district, and declaring that, if he could do so, in five years he could surely win three thousand converts from heathenism. Dr. Newton had taken the letter to Elm Street Church, and had given those people this opportunity.

Though he pleaded most convincingly, they were unmoved.

With the recollection of the results of his letter sent to Dr. Newton thus vivid, one could well imagine that Mr. Thomas's anticipations for the service of the present occasion were not the most hopeful.

"Do you remember," said he after his introduction to them, "the opportunity given you three years ago to support a native preacher?" He saw by their faces that they did remember it.

"Well, I would like to say something about that pastor whom you refused to support. He could not rest until he was in the field. How do you think he was kept there? Let me tell you. On leaving here the next day, Dr. Newton went down into the country to Bloomingdale Church.

"At night he talked to those people about as he had talked to you, telling them of the wide doors opening in that marvelous land. He told them of this native Christian who so longed to publish to his people the simple story of Jesus. But after your refusal to help, he had not the faith to ask a little country Church to furnish support. Yet he saw how eagerly they listened; and he saw one woman in particular, whose face fairly beamed with joy as he told of the possibilities of this one worker.

"At the close of the service she came to Dr. Newton, and said eagerly: 'O, do let me furnish the money to put that man to work. I long to do it. For a whole year I have been praying for such an opportunity; and now, just when I have the money, here is the place for it. I want to keep a worker there as long as I live.'

"And right then she handed him the thirty dollars necessary for one year, because, as she said, she had come out that night feeling that through the speaker she should find the opportunity she sought. And now the fourteen little coins left by Jamie Latimer the morning the angels took him home are multiplying ten thousand fold in redeemed souls under the ministry of that faithful pastor-teacher in far-away India.

"Now, you may like to know something about the results so sanguinely promised by this preacher. Only three years have passed since he began the work; and yet in that time he has been the means of bringing to Christ the number that he thought he could reach in five years. Three thousand souls in three years! And that quiet woman sitting down there in her country home is, under God, the 'power behind the throne.' Her head wears the diadem. Three thousand redeemed souls! The work has been done which the preacher promised to do; but you have lost your crown!"

From the first an awful stillness settled upon that conscience-smitten people. As the speaker continued, the solemnity deepened, until, with the last utterance of the lost crown, it was as though sentence of final con-

demnation were pronounced against them in the burning words of the missionary.

"Through your pride and unbelief, you have lost it. To you it is lost, lost! What might have crowned your brow this holy Sabbath morning rests upon the head of one humble woman, rich in faith and love and good works."

Mr. Thomas paused. That was a solemn moment. He looked into their faces. Was it a foretaste of torments to come that he saw depicted in them? or what was it that rested in agony upon that unfaithful company of stewards?

At the close of the service, they were long in leaving the church, as if loath to come into the sunlight. Some of the humble ones, seeing their mistake, came to the speaker with true penitence and acknowledged their wrong. For they realized only too painfully that they had spurned the plea, not because they had no gifts, but because of bitterness toward certain official members who were usurping undue authority in the management of Church affairs. Ah, that morning they saw behind what a flimsy veil they had tried to conceal their parsimony, and how it was to the Lord himself that they must account as unfaithful servants!

Thus he went his rounds, this man of God, in and out among the Churches. And, sometimes, when he met these fossilized Christians, he almost forgot the country Church where, in the absence of the pastor, the people had given beyond their apportionment; or that other young suburban Church where, upon his first visit, three men gave thirty dollars each for the

support of native preachers in India; and, upon a second short visit, one other added his thirty dollars; and where they gathered about him, and asked questions concerning the work as long as he could stay, and then shouted after him: "Good-bye, good-bye! Come again!"

And he almost forgot, or, indeed, he never knew, about those few faithful givers who quietly, and of their poverty, dropped their gifts into the treasury. And he forgot, sometimes, that much of his work had been seed-sowing, and that the harvest was not yet.

But one fact he had not failed to observe: that the Church of Christ needed a great awakening. And while he stood humbled at his seeming lack of success, he prayed fervently that from the seed that had been sown there might grow up, in the near future, an abundant harvest.

Chapter XVII

An Awakening

A BEGINNING of the harvest was nearer than Mr. Thomas thought. Others, also, were praying. Mr. Palmer, the young preacher at Highland, oppressed by the state of spiritual death into which many of his townsfolk had fallen, earnestly thought how he might bring restoration to his needy people. His mind thus occupied, one morning, on his pastoral round, he stopped for consultation at the home of a good mother in Israel.

"Mrs. Morgan," said he, after sitting a little in silence, "I have the 'blues.'"

"How so?"

"Our people are so cold. I sometimes feel that I have missed my calling, and that I ought to step aside and let some one else come who could give the Church better service."

"Now, Mr. Palmer, you should n't take to yourself more than your share of the blame," said she. "We deserve some of it. I suppose Gabriel himself could n't do the work right without the help of the people. But let us see if there is n't some way out of this."

"Well, if you could give me a little ray of light before I go into the pulpit to-morrow morning, a great burden would be rolled from my heart. My seeming inability to do anything for this people has troubled

me for weeks; and I have about decided that, if one more trial does not bring some little encouragement, I would better give up. Why, I met Father Irwin just now, who sits in the front pew and always makes long prayers. After chatting a little—for the subject was uppermost in my mind—I said: 'Father Irwin, how long has it been since you have had a revival down here?'

" 'O,' said he, 'it 's been right smart of a while.'

"And I fear, Mrs. Morgan, it will be 'right smart of a while' longer if something does not happen soon to wake these people up."

"A prayer has been in my heart a good while," said she, "and perhaps now I may speak of it. Such a thought as I have, however, sometimes seems out of place in this obscure corner of the world. Possibly it belongs to a city Church to work out. But then, the good seed may possibly first take root in a quiet spot; and it may be so here. I think the trouble with us is that we are selfish, and the Lord can not bless us. Until we give up that way of life we will be spiritually dead."

"But how will you prevail upon some of these people to change their habits? One might as well try to resurrect a tombstone as to instill into their minds anything broader or nobler than they have always known. And yet I do not blame them. I, somehow, lack the power to help them."

Ignoring this bit of self-censure, Mrs. Morgan suggested: "If we only could get them to take an interest in some one besides themselves, or in some one outside of this little town! This is their world, and what-

ever promises to build it up they will support; but they are unable to see that anything lies beyond its borders. Since the cold reception given Mr. Thomas, I have felt that, if we could kindle missionary enthusiasm, we should find the whole life of the Church quickened."

For a little, Mr. Palmer said nothing. He, apparently, did not just know whether her plan would work. Presently his face brightened, and he said: "I will try that; indeed, I will. I believe there is something in it. But I must go now to my study. I will see you at church to-morrow. Good-bye."

He did try Mrs. Morgan's advice. And the next morning, when he stood in the pulpit, his people looked first at him and then at each other. For a new glory shone in his face; the discouraged tone had gone from his voice; and he stood erect and courageous in the strength of a holy ambition.

When he announced his text he felt that much of the coldness that had frozen him for so many months had suddenly melted away; and now, to a sympathetic audience, he confidently read: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice." Some there were that day who opened their eyes in surprise at the freedom with which the young man spoke. Some few, to be sure, looked in scorn toward their neighbors as he unfolded the universal kingdom. But other faithful ones, by their prayers, held him up before the Throne.

And when he was through, the people, one and all, said they never heard him preach like that before. They talked about it during the week. It was noticed, also, that a larger number than usual came out to

the prayer-meeting. And how the preacher poured out his soul for the spread of Christ's kingdom! To the utter amazement of most of those there, but in answer to the faith of the pastor, while they were all kneeling, one staunch old member, who always took "the chief seat in the synagogue," and who prayed with stiffness and formality, "I thank thee, Lord, that I am not as other men," began: "O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we need thy mercy. Were it not for the multitude of thy mercies, we should have been cut off before this for our selfishness. Forgive us, Lord, that we so long have thought that the provisions of thy grace were only for ourselves. O, Lord, help us, from this time, to do our part toward sending the gospel to all people. And may thy kingdom speedily come! Amen!"

That was a victory. And what petitions followed from some whose lips had seldom moved in public prayer! It was a time long to be remembered in the little church.

The next week, so fast village news travels, other members who had long ceased attendance upon the mid-week service were present. The same zeal expressed in prayers, testimonies, and songs, seemed to fill each heart.

This evangelistic fire took practical turn. Men and women began to bring their gifts, until the usual benevolent collections were doubled. One and another, coming up with money that they had kept for themselves, handed it over to the pastor.

"Here, Brother Palmer, are ten dollars of the Lord's money. I had intended to get a new lap-robe; but

it is n't mine to use that way. I can not take it now. I see differently since the prayer you offered at the meeting the other night."

One woman said: "Here are fifteen dollars that I thought would buy a new set of dishes; but since what I heard you say the other morning about the need of immediate contributions to the work of spreading the gospel, I think I can use my old dishes another year."

"You may take these two dollars," said a young girl of limited means. "I have been storing them away for the last month, waiting for cold weather, so I could buy some skates. Maybe the cold weather won't come; and, if it does, I can borrow cousin Jane's, when she does n't want them, and let this money help on the time when the Lord shall reign."

With emotion, the young preacher took the money; for he knew something of that girl's sacrifice.

"Please, Mr. Palmer," said a small boy, as he stood at the door of the preacher's study, "do you think this would do those poor people any good?"

"Yes, my boy, to be sure it would do good," said the pastor fervently, as a five-cent piece dropped from the chubby hand into his own. "How came you to give this?"

"Uncle Jim gave me that to buy candy; but, somehow, candy do n't taste so good since you told us in Sunday-school about the children away over there that have n't any Bibles. So I wanted you to send this to them."

When the little lad had gone, and the pastor sat down before the fire, he began to calculate how long

it would take to bring the world to Christ if all the little children of the present generation could be taught as that boy had been taught.

But the greatest wonder of all, in the way of opened pocket-books, occurred a few days later, when "the old miser," as he was familiarly called, drove in from the country. He stopped at the pastor's study. He had scarcely hitched his team, when Mr. Palmer's cheery voice sounded on the crisp air.

"Good morning, Uncle Jacob; come in and warm."

"Wall, I 'm comin' in; but I 'm not a bit cold;" as he entered the room. "I 'm not as cold 's I was more'n two weeks ago, before I heard you tellin' about the Lord reignin'. Somehow, I seemed to be waked right out of a dream by what you said. Suthin' got hold of me then, and I hain't ben able to git shet of it sence, nor I hain't wanted to very much, nuther."

"What was it, my good brother, that got hold of you?" asked Mr. Palmer, strangely moved by this unexpected resurrection.

"I do n't know 't I can tell what 't was; but suthin' 't made me see how mean I 'd lived. Why, you know how all these years I 'd never let my wife have her dollar for the Missionary Society; and how, if she got it a' tall, she had to sell eggs and take in washin' to earn it. But here 's twenty dollars; and that ain't all I 'll give, nuther; for I see now that all I 've got belongs to the Lord. There 'll be more comin' after a while."

"I did not suppose the Lord could do so much for old Uncle Jacob," the preacher soliloquized, as he sat, deep in meditation, after the renewed man had

gone. "And was it my lack of faith that prevented this gracious work sooner? I fear so."

But this was not the end of the revival. Before the month had passed, it began to be noised, outside of the church, that there was something unusual going on up there.

"Why," said one, "I did not know that Christian people could have so much to live for. You would think they had on hand the greatest business on earth. Say we go up to-night to their prayer-meeting."

And they came, and others with them—people who never before had taken any interest in the affairs of a Christian life. And that night, somehow, those good people who so recently had extended their sympathies to the ends of the earth were strangely moved to pray for their unconverted neighbors. Prayers that before had fallen like lead upon the hearts of their subjects had in them an unwonted warmth that melted away the doubts of years.

And often one would be heard to say: "Why, if this is the kind of life Christians live, I want to be one of them."

So it happened that sinners began to offer themselves to the Lord. People never had known of such an awakening in the history of Highland. The whole village was stirred. Nor was that all. Like a light upon a hill, this gracious work sent its rays out over the country; and from various neighborhoods men drove in with their big wagons full of people anxious to attend the great revival; and many drove away from the village with a light in their hearts that had never been there before. Fires that had gone out

were rekindled on many hearthstones; and others were fanned into brighter glow as the good work spread.

Again Mr. Palmer stopped at Mrs. Morgan's, not much like the sorry man that had called there six weeks before. The dejected look was gone from his face, and the tired manner from his walk. His blue eyes beamed with hope.

"I wish," he said, "that this work might not stop. It is marvelous what may be done."

"Indeed, that is so," said Mrs. Morgan. "Of course, it often happens that a revival works in the very opposite way from this one; and the awakening of sinners precedes the kindling of missionary interest. That appears the usual course. I am coming to believe, of late, that what has been done for Highland may be witnessed throughout the country. I first heard the idea expressed by Mr. Thomas; and it has come to be my own firm conviction that the next great awakening that sweeps this land will be a missionary revival; and then, if I am living, I expect to behold glorious triumphs."

Even now, if you should chance to pass through the pretty village of Highland, people would speak in wonder of that memorable season. Not many of them saw any connection whatever between the revival and the previous pouring out of gifts upon the missionary altar. But some saw it; and one who never could forget it was Mr. Palmer himself; and the remembrance of it added to the succeeding years of his ministry such confidence and power as, possibly, no other experience could have given.

Courage, fainting ambassadors! Have you done what young Palmer did? Have you shown your people the extent of the "riches of Christ"? If not, be not dismayed at their spiritual apathy. Perchance you have not fed them with the food their souls crave; but, believe it, God has his waiting children—some in homes of splendor, some in homes of poverty—waiting for the message he would have you deliver. And be assured that when they hear that message, they will open their hands and pour out their gifts; and then, ah, then, what fullness of salvation will descend upon them!

Chapter XVIII

Every Woman

It was one of those comparatively cool days late in August, when one feels in the air and sees in the occasional yellow leaf and the autumnal haze that the "melancholy days" are coming. At such times we remember our childhood home, and seem to see our mother there, and, it may be, remember that she is not there now. At such times our love, taking a light hold on this life with its transitions, centers itself upon the life to come. Yet it may be that, when night closes in and we sit within the cheer of our own home, our little ones near us asleep, our papers and books before us, we easily call back our affections to this changing world. And it is well that we can do this; for we are not put here to long for the world to come, but to help make this world better.

So, although Mrs. Crowell had felt, that afternoon, something of sadness, when she sat down at night to prepare her annual report she was in her usually hopeful mood.

"You surely must get out of this work," Mr. Crowell said for about the twenty-fifth time. "You tell them next year that they will have to get some one else," as he peered at her from over the top of the book he was reading.

She made no remark, but plied herself the more diligently to the work in hand.

After an hour of application, she stopped to scan her report. Each item was carefully filled out, and the total amount for the year was before her. Her district had been apportioned twelve hundred dollars. Once it had raised even more than that amount; but this year it lacked two hundred and forty-one dollars and eighteen cents. Only nine hundred and fifty-eight dollars and eighty-two cents raised! Mrs. Crowell studied the separate items to see if by any means she could make the amount larger. She added one column at a time, first from the top down, then from the bottom up. Then she added two columns at a time, then three; but, do her best, she could not make other than nine hundred and fifty-eight dollars and eighty-two cents.

She sat back in her chair and thought it all over. Had she done her very best during those twelve months to gather in the mites? Chagrined and grieved was she at the thought of the moments of repining and discouragement which she had indulged when the load seemed too heavy.

And all the while that two hundred and forty-one dollars and eighteen cents deficit cast its spectral shadow before her. Two hundred and forty-one dollars and eighteen cents! "How many souls," she queried, "does that shut out of the kingdom? Why has not the full amount been raised? Where is the trouble?"

Then she thought of the faithful secretaries—women who had stood by her all the year. She thought them over one by one. She could not say that any of them should have done more. Several

of them, to be sure, had sent in very small amounts; but the times were hard, and some of the people were quite poor.

So that, side by side with the report of four hundred dollars offered by St. Paul's, was another of one dollar from a weak Church away on the outskirts of the city. This was sent by a woman who, with her husband and little daughter, constituted the Missionary Society at that place. Accompanying the dollar was the following humble message: "I do feel so ashamed to send this small amount; but I 'll ask the Lord to so bless it that it may do double or triple duty." The hard times grew harder, and during all that year she was not able to send another cent. Who knows but that the Lord did double or quadruple her gift, so that the one dollar was as though it had been four? Certainly the woman who sent, from her large society, four hundred dollars, and felt to "thank our Lord" for his help in raising the money, was no more acceptable with the gift than was that obscure representative of the struggling society who felt "ashamed to send" so small a sum. Did not the Lord know of the "wee baby girl" in that one woman's home who, as the mother wrote, would furnish another mission worker in the coming years?

A moment Mrs. Crowell paused, in her reflections, to speak to her husband of this royal giver.

These faithful women! No, the cause of the deficit could not be with them. They and their assistants had done what they could.

But then, ah, then, there was the great host of Christ's redeemed ones who had done literally noth-

ing to publish the tidings—women who had not given so much as one poor nickel or dime, nor even lifted their hearts in one feeble prayer for the coming of the kingdom. Ah, there was the problem,—not so much to secure increased devotion from those who were already faithful as to secure a little service from every one.

Among those "women that are at ease" she recalled some who had been active workers. In two or three cases, she remembered whole societies that had become extinct.

Discouraging facts, some of these. But then, there was the motto: "Every woman in the Church a member of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society." It had been a prayer, the realization of which seemed very far away at times; and yet a prayer that, without too great a stretch of faith, she felt she could offer.

So she finished her report, and sent it away.

A few weeks later, when she left for the annual convention, the injunction from her husband, the last minute before she boarded the train, was that she make sure of some one else to take the secretaryship for the coming year.

Now, though she meant to show due respect to his wishes, she not only consented when asked to continue her present relation, but, during her absence, she was made to feel such a deep call to that very work that she went home determined to give more time to it than she had given during any of the ten years in which she had engaged in this labor of love.

She did not at first see how she was to do any more; for there were Mr. Crowell and Nellie, who

must have the care they needed. But she talked it over with her mother, and it was agreed that, whenever a Church should send for her to come and present to its people the cause of perishing millions, she should go.

In order to open the way to those whose attention had not been directed to the work, she addressed a letter to a prominent woman at each Church where there was no Auxiliary, asking her to answer from her standpoint, and in a few words, the following question: "Why have you no Woman's Foreign Missionary Society in your Church?" Then she awaited results. Of course, some of the twenty-five ladies ignored her request. A few wrote that, the subject not having been presented to them, they had not given it much thought. Others replied that their people were too poor to do more than support their own work. Still others wrote that there could be such an organization among them, but that they positively did not believe in foreign missions, and, therefore, it would be useless to attempt anything of the kind.

But a few of those who thus responded, presenting their reasons, also asked her to come and urge upon their people the needs of the heathen world, with the thought that at least a little seed might fall into good ground, and result, in later years, in a harvest of missionary interest.

Only a few there were, at first, who asked her to come; but others followed their example, until the invitations were as many as she could accept. Even some who had declared it useless to make the attempt were the most urgent in their appeals to her.

When she first set out, her little Nell, who was now ten years of age, was unwilling to make the sacrifice necessary each time her mother was away over night.

One afternoon, while the valise was being packed, she came to her mother with tears in her eyes, and said: "Mamma, I just can't bear to have you go away. It is so awful lonesome without any mamma in the house."

Mrs. Crowell stopped her work, and drew the child to her.

"Nellie darling," she said, "mamma does not like to go away and leave her daughter. I would not do it but for the little girls who have n't any mammas, or whose mammas throw them away to die because they do not want girls. Could you let mamma go for their sakes?"

"Yes, mamma, I 'll try," said Nell. "I 'll try real hard." Then, after an effort to keep back the tears, she said: "Maybe I could help you pack your valise." And while Mrs. Crowell gave directions, the willing feet ran on errands, in their eagerness to speed mother on her mission of love for little girls who had no one to care for them.

Later in the afternoon, while Mrs. Crowell sat resting before leaving for the station, she heard a soft voice in the room that opened from hers; and she listened, for she thought she heard something about mamma in what the voice said.

"O, God, be with mamma," she heard the child pray, "and take care of her, and bring her back home to-morrow; and help her to help the little girls that do n't have any mammas and the little girls that are

thrown away. And help me to be ever so glad to have mamma go. For Jesus' sake. Amen."

"God bless the child!" said the mother, fervently.

And ever after that, when Mrs. Crowell was preparing for a trip into the country, Nell seemed delighted to help her off, and did everything that her young mind could suggest to hasten her departure, as though thus she would the sooner bring relief to her little sisters in the Orient.

But what astonished Mrs. Crowell beyond all, occurred during the early winter, when the days were so short that, occasionally, in order to reach the most distant points, she was obliged to leave the house in the morning before her husband and Nell were up. She insisted upon their taking their usual amount of sleep, as Mr. Crowell was not very strong that winter, and she did not need his help. On those few occasions when it was necessary for her to start so early, she left very quietly, that she might not disturb the precious sleepers. But one morning, just as she was about to step from the porch, she remembered that she had left a package of telling leaflets on the library table. She opened the door, and entered so very cautiously that no one heard her. When she reached the top of the stairs, she heard a voice from the adjoining room. It was her husband praying. She stood until the prayer was finished. What could have come over him? He not only did not oppose her, but here he was actually praying for her in the early morning, after he thought she had gone. That prayer was an inspiration. She quietly went for the leaflets, and then out again into the early dawn, with double her

usual courage. And while she was away during those two days, somehow the thought of her husband's prayer so enthused her that the people responded more readily than they had ever done before. On her return, as she approached her home, she declared to herself that it was his prayer that did it.

But that was not the end of the transformation in Mr. Crowell. As each quarter rolled round, he would manifest renewed interest in his wife's work.

"Is n't it 'most time to send off your report?" he would ask. Then, when she was ready, he would get his pencil and paper, and, sitting down by her side, would go through the columns with her; and noting the increase from quarter to quarter, as they came each time a little nearer to the "every woman," he rejoiced even as she.

They approached the end of the year. As she had hoped, she was enabled to visit every place on the district, and had effected the organization of new Auxiliaries. So that this last report, which would be compared with the one a year before, was of great interest to them both. One night she brought out a large pile of papers.

"O, it is time for the report, is it?" said he. "Well, I 'm glad, for I want to see how the figures stand." And he went at it with avidity. No deficit this time! An increase over the previous year of four hundred dollars! And what pleased them most was that this increase represented as many new members on the Auxiliary lists. Nearer they were to the realization of their motto by four hundred names. One secret of the success was the personal work that she and

her helpers had done. They had recognized the necessity of first becoming acquainted with the people themselves; then they found it easy to introduce their work.

"Four hundred new names!" said Mrs. Crowell. "That is in answer to faith; but I could not have done it without the help of those loyal women. You remember the woman who sent just one dollar last year, and whose society consisted of herself and husband and little girl. At the beginning of this year she reported an increase of two, and wrote: 'The two new members are my youngest two children, six and two years of age, respectively. With my husband, there are five of us. So I can have a regular attendance of four at our meetings. I will send five dollars every year, if no more; but I will try to get others to join us.' Is not that royal?"

"I should say it was!" said Mr. Crowell. "That does one's soul good."

So they worked on together until the report was finished.

"Speaking of enlisting every woman of the Church," said Mr. Crowell, a little later, "I wish it might be done; but do you really think it possible?"

"My faith has reached that point, and yet I see great obstacles in the way. For instance, if a woman thinks herself too poor to take a Church paper and also belong to the Missionary Society, I think that she should by all means take the paper. I think, however, that there are very few who might not put by two cents a week. And I am sure that those who did it prayerfully would be greatly blessed. Yes, I believe in our motto, 'Every woman.'"

Several years afterward, when declining health indicated that she must give up the secretaryship, she said to her husband: "It sometimes makes me feel sad to think that my work is nearly done. I want to keep going, though, till I see the missionary revival that 's coming."

For she saw, clearly enough, that it was coming. Why not? Had not woman gone to her Lord with the sublime faith that, by merely gathering up the crumbs from under the table, she should feed the weary multitude? And her Lord had answered: "O, woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Had she not, through the decades, been praying and working and looking for the coming of that day? Surely the Lord would keep his word. That day was coming! Reader, do you see it? Look, and you will. The diffusion of missionary literature, the increased offering of gifts, the large number of candidates, the vast army of Sunday-school recruits, the organization of young people for Christian work—what is all this but the coming of that day? You can no more stop it than you can stop the rolling of the "stone cut out of the mountain"!

Chapter XIX

"Lent to the Lord"

Alice Hetherington regarded her children very much as did the ancient Hebrew mother, when she carried her boy up to the sanctuary, saying: "As long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord." Therefore, though they were hers by the right of "sacred motherhood," they were his by the sovereign right of him in whom we all live. They were hers, she knew, only to train for his royal service. With her, in this belief, stood Ward, who thought no expense too great to make complete their preparation for the most useful life-work.

His theory, that a child could do best what it liked to do, guided him in their education. And four of them, Bertha, Lewis, Harold, and Carlotta, were unfolding in the genial atmosphere of that delightful household.

As has already been intimated, Bertha early began to show a decided talent for art—her father's taste emphasized. Under his direction, at odd times, she had produced, even in her early school-days, some very creditable work.

"Why, you have a genius in this daughter of yours," Dr. Brower, his pastor, had remarked one day, as he entered Mr. Hetherington's parlor, after examining some of Bertha's drawings.

"Possibly," said her father.

"You certainly have," said the doctor. "You ought to put her into an art school at once."

"I scarcely think that," replied Mr. Hetherington. "She must have a liberal education first, as a foundation. Then she can specialize. I certainly want her to make the very most of her talent."

"Doubtless you are right, after all, in giving her the general education first, so she does not lose her taste for the other."

"There scarcely seems possibility of that," said her father.

The years passed, until, one evening in early summer, a large class was to be graduated from the city high school. Bertha Hetherington was then eighteen years of age—a young woman of surpassing qualities of mind and heart. That summer night, to the joy of her father, she stood before a large audience, the one most highly honored in a class of one hundred and fifty.

During her school-days, thus far, she had passed parts of several vacations with her brush, and in like manner had employed many odd days during the year. Having acquired considerable skill, even before her graduation, her father had promised her that, at the completion of her high school course, before entering the university, she might spend one whole year in the exclusive study of painting.

"Now I shall revel in colors for the next twelve months," said she that night; for she could scarcely wait to put her books away before planning for her beloved art. Indeed, had she not possessed a strong

will, she would have applied herself with difficulty to the humdrum course of the public schools when her soul was aflame with that other love.

The pent-up fire seemed to burst forth with new brightness when once she was released from her former studies.

As marked as was this intellectual gift, her spiritual gifts surpassed it; so that, whatever might be her success, she had visions of a time when the products of her brush might enable her to make benevolent investments, like those of her father. Indeed, she seemed to combine the striking characteristics of both her parents—her mother's vivacity with her father's thoughtfulness.

Of all the young people of St. Paul's Church, she was pre-eminently the favorite. No one questioned her right to the distinction. She was so utterly unconscious of any honor attached to herself, and so forgetful of her own comfort and inclination when she could be of help to another, that young and old did her quiet reverence. The thought would have been repugnant to her; but many another remarked: "Well, she is as nearly perfect as people ever become in this world."

Did a little girl, poorly dressed and friendless, stand apart from the other girls of the Sunday-school, she was just the one to whom Bertha addressed her most cheering words. So that many a disconsolate child went to her home with courage to take up the monotonous round of weary work, because of the sympathetic smile of this beautiful young woman.

Well-dressed people, who frequently visited the large and flourishing Sunday-school at St. Paul's, often noted, with surprise, the proportion of evidently poor children among richly dressed; and if one sought the explanation, and were a careful observer, he would not be long in discovering it in the royally hospitable manner and striking figure of Bertha Hetherington, as she moved quietly about in the Sunday-school in the capacity of official visitor. An almost indispensable individual she seemed to the elegant Church where the good and gifted Dr. Brower had returned as pastor for a second term.

"How goes the painting?" asked the doctor of her one evening, when there was a little lull in the demands upon her attention at the monthly home social she was accustomed to give in her mother's parlors to the various Sunday-school classes.

"I enjoy it, as I always have done."

"What are you painting now?"

"A Scottish landscape."

"A copy, is it?"

"O no, it is original. I sketched it when we were in the Highlands last summer. Have you never been in my studio?"

"I have not been there. You admit people, sometimes?"

"O yes, a few who would care to go."

"May I claim the privilege of one of those few?"

"Certainly, if you will ask father to take you. I can not leave this company to-night."

And the doctor hurried away for the coveted

pleasure of admission into the studio of the young artist. Though he had done little with the brush himself, he was no mean critic. He always reveled in the combinations of light and shade, and was gratified when he could discover the evidences of genius in the work of any young man or woman. Indeed, he was alert for opportunities to help them, and had encouraged more than one to push on to distinction.

So it was with intense delight that he followed Mr. Hetherington up the stairs to the large attic; and it was with no less delight that the latter threw back the curtains of the studio to admit his honored guest.

Such a vision of beauty! Superb copies of the works of the masters looked down upon him from the walls, and elegant original landscape paintings from various easels. The very best of the whole house seemed to be in that room.

"And to think that all this is the work of your own daughter!" said Dr. Brower, in astonishment. "You would not know from her that she had done so much, she says so little about it."

"Yes," said her father, "she has, apparently, rather a moderate estimation of her own ability. But if you are not in a hurry to join the people below, suppose we sit here a while before the grate."

"This daughter of yours must study in Europe," said the doctor.

"Possibly, after she completes the university course. She and Lewis will enter upon that next year."

"Delightful for them to go together! Has Lewis any gift like Bertha's?"

"Not a particle. They are no more alike in their tastes than children from two different families. I suppose he will be a business man, like myself."

Presently the two men descended to the parlors, to find the young people enjoying one of the best of good times. Dr. Brower, making his way to where Bertha happened to be standing by herself a minute, said: "I surely am indebted to you for the peep into your beautiful studio. You are to be congratulated upon your prospects. In my large circle of acquaintances, I have only met one artist whom I think your equal, and, in certain particulars, even he was inferior. I think I must place you just a little above him."

"Thank you for your favorable comment."

An hour later, and the house was again quiet. A company of St. Paul's young people had gone to their various homes after a most delightful evening under the Hetheringtons' hospitable roof.

"Come on," said Lewis, a truly handsome youth of sixteen years, "let us have some singing."

While he sat down to play, the other three children gathered at the piano. After several popular airs, in which their voices blended sweetly, Carlotta, a pleasant girl of twelve years, said: "Now, let 's sing something good."

"Yes, Miss Propriety," said Lewis, "for your edification we will sing a hymn. What will you have, Carlotta?" And he handed her the book for her selection.

"O, this one I like," she said, returning the book. And then they sang:

"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Savior's brow,"

and continued to the last stanza:

"Since from his bounty I receive
Such proofs of love divine,
Had I a thousand hearts to give,
Lord, they should all be thine."

By this time Mr. and Mrs. Hetherington stood unnoticed at the entrance of the front parlor, whither they had been drawn, from their reading in the library, by the words of the hymn. They listened through, and then went quietly back, their children, meanwhile, making other selections.

"Do you think they all mean that, 'Had I a thousand hearts to give, Lord, they should all be thine'?" asked Ward.

"I think so, though I am not so sure about Lewis. His religion does not seem to have taken a very deep hold. It would suit him better, I fear, to give the Lord the one heart and keep the nine hundred and ninety-nine himself."

"I fear that would be the case," said Ward.

Then they listened again to the singing: "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," and their son's voice, deep and full, was heard in the bass: "Let me hide myself in thee."

"God grant it!" said Ward, fervently.

"Yes," said Alice. "May he hide them all; for

they are his. They are 'lent to the Lord,' every one of them."

"Indeed, they are," replied her husband, "for whatever service he wants."

Possibly, Ward Hetherington, it is easier for you to say that to-night, when you know not what the Lord wants, and when you have your children all about you in your beautiful home, than it will be later, when you know. We shall see.

Chapter XX

A Social Innovation

THE autumn weeks passed quickly. Chrysanthemums were in bloom. In the hands of people in the street, and peeping out from behind the lace in windows, one saw them—the red, the white, and the yellow, nodding pleasantly to passers-by. The season for receptions was well on. "At home" cards, carried by the various postmen to different parts of the city, called together many a company of elegant ladies. And many a stately home was the scene of flowers and dress, refreshment and social chat, each woman vying with others in her effort to make the hour pleasant for her friends. Many were the compliments paid and the smiles returned, as richly-dressed women passed in and out at these costly receptions.

"O, mother," said Bertha to Mrs. Hetherington early one afternoon, as they waited in the hall for their carriage, "I almost wish they would not invite me to any more of these gatherings. They are pleasant, to be sure, and one meets delightful people; but look at all this time when I might be painting. I could have finished that landscape this afternoon."

"Yes, my dear, I know. I sometimes feel that way myself; and yet I think that we often find opportunities for helping people, even on the most formal occasions. We do not want to lose our hold on them socially;

for that is one way of approach with questions of graver importance."

"I am sure of that; and yet it sometimes seems like spending a great amount of time and labor for what brings little return."

"But we can not always tell. I trust that, before the season is over, you and I may find in this somewhat burdensome social custom a real means of doing good."

"Meanwhile," said Bertha, "I suppose we shall not find it so burdensome after all; for I think that behind the formality is some genuine friendship, which I certainly appreciate. But here is the carriage."

And they sped away to a distant portion of the city, to add their part toward the enjoyment of a social hour. A little later they were passing through their friend's handsomely-decorated parlors, greeting, among others, Mrs. St. James and Mrs. Galbraith, in their usual royal manner. The Hetheringtons were such delightfully social people! Everybody liked them.

"I should think that they would give a reception," Mrs. St. James remarked to Mrs. Galbraith, after the ladies in question had passed from the room. "It seems years since Mrs. Hetherington received her friends in a formal way."

"But she is so taken up with other interests that I doubt if she would think she had time."

"O, well, she does not devote all of her time to charitable work, as is shown by her presence at these receptions."

"She comes nearer spending all of her time that way than one would think," replied Mrs. Galbraith.

"She seems to be continually sowing seed. Have you heard her chatting with the ladies here?"

"Not yet."

"Well, I have not meant to listen, but I could not help hearing once in a while. You would be surprised. She never says anything but what is 'pat,' so to speak; but she does find the most opportunities to say a good word for her beloved work. Then you know her house is open every month for the Sunday-school; so, surely, her time is fully employed."

"We meet often," said Mrs. Chandler, as she approached. "I suppose we shall meet again in about two weeks."

"How is that?"

"O, have you not received your invitations? Probably you will receive them this afternoon. Mine came this morning."

"You keep us in suspense. Whose reception is it?" asked Mrs. St. James. "We are away behind the times."

"Mrs. Ward Hetherington's."

"Ah," said Mrs. St. James, with eyes wide open. "It will be an elegant affair, I know."

"It will be very delightful, at any rate. I am sure of that," said the admiring Mrs. Chandler.

"O, Mrs. Galbraith," said Mrs. Hetherington, as the former stepped aside to speak to her, "can I see you at your home to-morrow afternoon? I want a talk with you at the earliest opportunity."

"Certainly, I shall be glad to have you come. I shall look for you at—?"

"Three o'clock, if convenient for you."

And at that hour the next day, Mrs. Hethering-

ton's carriage stopped at her friend's door; for she had found Mrs. Galbraith a very helpful confidante on a number of important occasions. At this time she wished a reassurance in her plan for the reception. Mrs. Galbraith listened with eager interest throughout. But, strange to say, she did not offer any encouragement whatever to Mrs. Hetherington. Indeed, she was decidedly skeptical.

"If you do," she said, with emphasis, in reply to her friend's inquiry, "you will kill it. It will be a flat failure. I shall tremble for you."

"That is not altogether consoling, I am sure," said Alice. "I certainly want nothing insipid. I would rather stop right here."

"But think of it! Your invitations are out for some of the first ladies in the city—ladies that have not a particle of interest in what you are planning. You are sure to bring yourself and your plan into contempt."

"Well, I do not want that; for no good would come of it."

"Mark my word! You can not sustain what you propose. If it were a gathering of our Church people only, it would be different; but for you to attempt to return merely social favors in that way would be absurd."

"Then you can not help me?" said Alice, smiling.

"No, I am sorry to say I can not, except to advise you to drop the idea at once, and adopt sane methods for the entertainment of your friends."

"Very well, then, I will think a little farther about it, before I determine fully what to do."

"I hope you will," laughed Mrs. Galbraith, "and decide to abandon your wild project."

"Good-bye, then, until we meet at the reception; for I shall have too much to do to call again."

One less resolute and resourceful than Alice Hetherington would have given up at once. But she did not.

"Somehow, Bertha, I feel that we must carry this through. My heart is set on it. I do not believe we shall fail. I can not enthuse Mrs. Galbraith; but I know that I can depend upon the young ladies." This she said to her daughter that night, as she sat before the studio grate; for it was there that they had spent the most of their evenings of late, planning for this reception. Five hundred invitations were out; and everybody expected something superb at the Hetheringtons'. For had not Alice entertained her friends before? And did they not all remember her really brilliant success?

Just then the curtains parted, and in stepped Rose Brower, the doctor's lovely daughter; for she and Bertha had worked together to carry out Mrs. Hetherington's suggestions. And a very pleasing picture they made, as they sat bent over their colors; for Rose, also, did neat work with her brush. Intimate friends as they were, their mutual occupation brought them many hours of profit and pleasure in each other's company; though, with Rose, the art was not a passion, and she would never do more than a little light work for her own immediate enjoyment, or, as in this case, for a friend's accommodation.

"What! you have not finished yours, have you?" asked Bertha.

"O no, indeed! I came over for a few points. Mrs. Hetherington," she said, turning to Alice, "am I doing this as you wished?"

Mrs. Hetherington examined the work as Rose unrolled separate small packages.

"That is done beautifully," said she.

"If these are all right, then, I will finish the rest."

Some half-dozen other girls had been let into the secret, and would be ready for service when needed. Indeed, they had already helped Mrs. Hetherington in her preparations, and were waiting expectantly now for further directions. So much easier is it for young people than for older to adopt an innovation.

Mrs. Claymore, with some hesitancy be it said, fell in with her daughter's plan. Mrs. Chandler, with an outward show of approval, accepted the invitation to assist; but her mental comment was not altogether favorable. So that two or three hearts beat a little nervously as the day approached.

"I only hope she has given it up," said Mrs. Galbraith to her husband, one evening. "But it would be just like her to execute her plan."

"O, she will not give it up," said he. "You may depend upon that; and she will not make a failure; she is not one of that kind."

Friday afternoon came, almost the choicest day of the season. Nature was with Alice, although she had not the sympathy of some of her friends.

Mrs. Galbraith and Mrs. Chandler were on hand to assist, together with the young ladies, whose faces, some of them, glowed with a purpose not there before. Evidently, something noble had absorbed their

thoughts that November afternoon. Something more than mere formality held them there that day. Even Mrs. Galbraith's apprehension ceased as soon as the guests began to arrive. She saw that it did not strike them as a failure. One no sooner entered the door than an unusual impression rested upon her. She did not, at first, know what it was; but she felt it. Possibly it was in part due to Carlotta, who gracefully admitted each guest upon her arrival. And it might have been due, in part, to those who were leaving the house; for they evinced, in face and manner, an unwonted delight in the hour just passed; so that those entering were eager to know what it was that gave such cheer.

"Can I show you to the back parlor?" Mrs. Galbraith would say to a newly-arrived guest—for by this time she, herself, was thoroughly in love with the plan—and the guest would be shown to a pretty table in the corner of the room, behind which sat Rose Brower. On the table was a profusion of pretty and appropriate designs from her brush; and every design was a missionary appeal. Each guest was given one.

"Have you been to the dining-room?" Mrs. Chandler would ask. And here sat Bertha and another young lady at either end of the table, with even a more surprising variety of delicate designs in pleasing array. Upon each was tastily printed a bit of intelligence. This is the way some of them read: "Tell your people how fast we are dying, and ask if they can not send the gospel a little faster;" "There are ten hundred million heathen in the world;" "It is doubtful if any

Christian is fully saved who is not anxious that the whole world should be saved;" "'May God quickly remove these money difficulties,' says a native woman, 'so that the work of the Lord may be well done;'" "Writes a missionary from Foochow: 'It is a blessed work you are doing; it pays a thousand-fold.'" One lady of wealth looked a little serious when she read her souvenir: "Forgive us, Lord, if at any time we have given pence when we should have given silver; if we have given silver when we should have given gold." A bright idea seemed to flash through the mind of another lady as she read: "A poor woman in New York City, who keeps a small fruit-stand, gives, regularly, twenty-five dollars a year to the cause of missions—and this, too, when her entire income is not over three hundred dollars."

Other souvenirs read as follows: "'I can go to heaven,' said a missionary; 'but do n't ask me to go back to America;'" "'It does not take long for prayer to reach China by way of the Throne,' said one of our girls;" "In Uganda a native Christian will work three months for a copy of the New Testament;" "Do you mean it when you pray 'Thy kingdom come'?" "We give, on an average, fifty cents a member for the conversion of the world, while the Moravians give twelve dollars a member;" "You and I will soon be gone; give to-day;" "The salvation of the world is waiting on the gifts of the Church;" "The Church has the money that is needed, and God is calling for it;" "Will a man rob God?" "How is it that you knew the good news so long before coming to tell us?" "Opportunity is power; when God opens a door, he

crowns the one who dares to enter;" "Christ alone can save this world; but Christ can not save this world alone;" "'Let us advance upon our knees,' was Neesima's motto;" "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters."

And many other gleams from the missionary altar shone into the hearts of the women there, until more than one thought she heard a pleading voice from some far distant land. Often the silent response in her own heart was: "Yes, Lord, I hear. Take me—my money, my influence, my social standing, my all." Many saw more clearly how they might turn everything to the glory of God. And why should not this have been the effect? Here was a Christian woman entertaining Christian women. Why should there not be, in such an occasion, an inspiration to something better? It was not so much what they read and heard and saw there that impressed them. But it was something unseen, though felt, (shall we say it was the Lord speaking to his daughters?) that taught them how they could honor him in more ways than they were accustomed. Certainly there was something very genuine in what the ladies said as they took leave of Mrs. Hetherington and Bertha. Nor had the reception been, as one might suppose, at all stiff or unnatural; but a most delightfully social occasion.

"I wonder if our Lucile knows anything about this?" asked Mrs. Fenton, as she passed out.

"I do not know; but she certainly had her part in making this reception possible; and surely she is having her reward for the help she was to me."

"I wonder," said Mrs. Fenton, "if the women of

India are still coming up in their white robes, as she saw them the night she left us?"

"It must be so, my dear Mrs. Fenton; and many of them, because her money has been going on its mission of light to that land."

"Believing this, I am content," she said, as, with tears in her eyes, she passed on.

"No one but Alice Hetherington could have done that," said Mrs. Galbraith to Mrs. Chandler, as they left the house.

"She knows how to use her power," was the reply. "And if other good people that have money but knew it, they could institute almost any desirable social reform."

"Mrs. Hetherington will see returns for this day's sowing in many of our city Churches," added Mrs. Galbraith.

"Bertha," said her mother, that night, in the library, as they sat talking over the reception, "I wonder how many of those women, who really seemed so deeply interested here to-day, will go to their homes and forget all about it?"

But sooner than Alice expected, she began to reap from her sowing. In two or three days several reassuring letters came.

One woman wrote as follows:

"I want to thank you for the beautiful and impressive object-lesson of yesterday. Few would have had the courage to give it; but I am glad you had. I never knew before that an afternoon reception could

be so eminently religious, and yet be none the less social. It may be that no one successfully could repeat your experiment; but it has opened our eyes to the possibilities of our influence and to the sacredness of our trust—those of us who hold the King's money. Thanking you again, I am Yours truly,

"Elizabeth Swinton."

"See here, Bertha," said her mother, "Mrs. Swinton is a leading woman in Calvary Church," a large and wealthy society of a sister denomination, "and this means hundreds, it may be thousands, added treasure toward saving the world."

Another letter was opened, which read thus:

"You do not know what a revelation I received at your house yesterday when I read, 'Will a man rob God?' I had read it before, but I never took it to myself until then. That is just what I am doing. I have made sure that there was nothing lacking in the appointments of my home, in my social demands, or in my dress. But when it comes to the claims of God, I have almost ignored them. While, probably, I ought not to leave those other duties undone, I most certainly should give paramount attention to his cause. Henceforth that blessed Name through which we have salvation shall be held above every other interest. His work shall receive largely of his money."

"And this Mrs. Crawford," said Mrs. Hethington to her daughter, "has long been the leading social spirit in Westminster Church. O, Bertha, I never thought of its coming out this way. This is almost

too much for me." And her eyes were filled with tears, as she opened and read the third letter:

"You may be encouraged to know that, although I am one who has given silver when I should have given gold, your happy reception yesterday afternoon completely revolutionized my personal plans; and this morning I handed to our pastor, Dr. Patterson, one hundred and fifty dollars, that I had intended to take this very day for really unnecessary household furnishings. Thank you for your timely innovation."

This was from Mrs. Gregory, the wife of the millionaire who lived at the end of the avenue.

"You never can know," wrote a fourth one, a timid little woman whose husband kept a grocery at the South-side, "what a delightful surprise, and a real inspiration, and, as I think, an answer to prayer, your gathering was. As you know, it will not mean very much to the cause from this quarter, for we do not have it to give. But for a long time I have felt that so many homes stand like great castles shut up within themselves, and that there must be some power that could enter them and set the treasure flowing. I believe that your plan will be used toward that end; for there was something in your parlors yesterday, beside the pretty designs and scraps of intelligence, that seemed to hold the heart of every woman there. I never could have imagined anything so completely triumphant. Rejoice with me that my prayer has been answered."

"This from the quiet Mrs. Snyder," said Alice. "I appreciate it even more than I do the notes that I received from the other ladies."

That night, as mother and father and daughter sat down to recount the experiences of the day, Alice gave Ward the four letters to read. He was deeply moved.

"Has not the Lord verified the wisdom of our choice when we decided upon the home field as the place in which we could best help the foreign? I see no reason why we may not be used more and more. I look, also, for years of great usefulness for Bertha after she has finished her education."

Bertha sat looking silently into the fire. Although he received no reply, he felt that she would second all he had said. She, like her mother, would be a power in whatever work she should engage. At length she aroused herself from her reverie, and, as if to free her mind from too sober reflections, she took her father by the arm, saying: "Come, would you not like to see that Scottish landscape? I have finally finished it. Mother, will you go, too?"

"Not to-night, thank you. I saw it this morning."

And Alice, sitting alone, thought of her husband's words. "He thinks, does he, that she will follow in my footsteps? Maybe, but—" and her eyes followed the flames leaping up the chimney.

Chapter XXI

Merited Honor

Four and a half years have whirled by since we last looked in upon the Hetherington household. It is now near the end of June. In a distant and more northern city, the roses are in bloom, and nod hospitably from verdant lawns to people passing along the streets. Bertha and Lewis, having just returned from a stroll over the campus, sit together before an open window in their pleasant room. The Seniors' vacation has begun, though there are yet three days before graduation.

"O say, Bert, is that picture ready for inspection?"

"Yes; but please do not call me 'Bert.'"

"O, come now, let me. Do let a fellow do as he wants to now and then. That is my pet name for you, honey."

"I like black Ann's name better."

"But I am not black Ann. I am your troublesome brother; so do let me call you 'Bert.'"

"Well, well, anything you like until we reach home. Then I know mother will veto that at once."

"The more reason why I should enjoy my liberty while I have it. I shall be glad, though, 'when this cruel war is over.' A fellow misses his mother once in a while, off at such a distance. If it had n't been for you, I should have gone 'where the woodbine twineth' long ago."

"I am happy to know that I have been of some service."

"So am I. But, to change the subject, I should like to ask you a question."

"Well?"

"How is it that God bestowed his gifts so unevenly upon you and me?"

"I am not so sure that he did. If so, the balance is in your favor."

"O, now, you know better. If I could handle colors as you can, would n't I hold my head high!"

"Well, then, I am glad there is something to keep you humble."

"But I could n't help it, Bert. I am sure I do n't see how you can. You just ought to hear the professors and students talk about that painting of yours in the university parlors. It is on everybody's tongue. I am proud of you, anyhow, if I have no reason to be proud of myself."

"Your gift is in music."

"I can sing and play a little; but, then, what does it amount to?"

"It will amount to something if you will apply yourself."

"I have been applying myself, for the last four years, to Cicero and Homer and Æschylus and science and mathematics, till I am tired."

"Yes, and I am proud of you, too, for the work you have done. Now is just the time for us both to develop our gifts. These four years have been mostly filled with the prose of life in our studies. Now we may hope for a little of the poetry."

"Very good suggestion. I may try it."

"Did I tell you," said Bertha, "that mother wrote that they would not arrive until Commencement-day?"

"Why, no; how is that?"

"Father, it happens, can not leave his business before Monday night."

"Now, I 'm disappointed. And yet that may give them all the time they want. Of course they will remain for the evening reception?"

"O yes; and we will all leave together the next night. That will bring us home Saturday morning."

On the evening of the reception the university parlors were filled with a happy company of professors, alumni, and friends. Among them moved Mr. and Mrs. Hetherington, renewing the acquaintances of former years; for it was from this institution that they themselves were graduated; and a few familiar faces were there in honor of Alma Mater.

The work of the Fine Arts College had been on exhibition in the parlors during the week, and was still left there for the inspection of any who might wish that privilege. Bertha, though not taking regular work in the art course, had yet given some attention to that department, and for her beautiful landscape at the exhibition she could easily have been awarded first prize. She refused, however, to enter as a competitor. But the painting had been the occasion of much favorable comment; and at the reception, especially, it seemed the center of attraction.

"That I call perfect," said a young man, as he stood before the picture. Though a stranger, he ad-

dressed Ward; for both were deeply absorbed in a study of its merits. "They tell me," he continued, "that she has devoted comparatively little time to the study of art since she came to the university, and that she had never given to it more than one year of unbroken application. How she could have produced such a painting as this I do not understand. She is certainly a genius. Let me see, who is she?" and he consulted his catalogue. "Bertha Hetherington; that name will yet stand high in the list of American artists." And, while the stranger continued his admiration of the picture, Ward quietly moved away.

"Still before this landscape?" asked Professor Wolever, who was at the head of the painting department.

"Not still here, but here again," replied the young man. "The more I look at it, the more I see its superiority over everything else on exhibition. Such delicacy of handling is marvelous."

And yet this young McGregor was, at that very moment, the leading artist in the city.

"And to think that she has not made painting a specialty," said he, turning again to the landscape.

"Have you not met her?" asked the professor.

"I have not so much as seen her," replied he.

"There she stands, with that tall gentleman, before Miss Jordan's water-color."

"O, indeed, that charming brunette?"

"She is quite as charming to meet," replied the enthusiastic professor; "and that gentleman by her side is her father."

"Her father? O yes, I see a strong resemblance

now; but he is the very one to whom I was making remarks about this landscape a few minutes ago. Fortunately, my comments were all favorable," with evident confusion at what might have been his chagrin had the picture possessed defects. "From his manner, you would not suppose he had ever heard of her," said McGregor, with growing interest in the subject of his conversation.

Just then Professor Wolever was called to another corner of the room.

"You wait till I come back, and I will introduce you, if you like."

"Thank you, I should be very glad to meet her," was the reply.

But after that, the demand upon the professor was so constant that the evening had nearly passed before there was time to think again of the young man. Meanwhile, Bertha, with her brother and parents, passed out. When their absence was discovered, if one had looked sharply, he could have seen a cloud pass over the handsome face of James McGregor. He turned again and gazed at the picture.

"Ho, ho, my friend," said Professor Wolever, coming toward him after the parlors were nearly empty, "and I never introduced you to our Miss Hetherington. She gave me a hurried farewell as she passed out. I am truly sorry."

"O no, that is all right," as he turned on his heel and walked away.

The next evening, while he sat before the easel in his studio, she was rolling rapidly away toward her distant home.

Bertha and her father were sitting together chatting, while Lewis and his mother were in the opposite section of the sleeper.

Said Mr. Hetherington to his daughter: "Professor Wolever urges me to send you to Europe."

"Yes, I know; but suppose I wait a year. I will have some advantages in the city; and I would like to be home awhile."

"It shall be as you like, my dear."

"After a little vacation through the summer, I will take up my painting in earnest, and see if I can not do something worthy before the year is over."

So the summer passed most delightfully for this gifted young woman, as she eagerly looked forward to the fall and winter months, with the prospective art work, which was to fill the days and weeks with solid joy. She built her hopes high; for, now that her school-days were over, there seemed to lie before her years of uninterrupted delight in the exercise of her talent. Nor did she propose to use it selfishly. It was a sacred trust.

She put everything in readiness, intending, with the opening of September, to enter her studio in earnest.

But the various organizations of the Church were almost inexorable in their demands upon her; and the early days of the month were slipping by before she could find time for the long-waited-for opportunity to begin her year's work as an artist.

"When do you suppose I ever will do any more painting?" she asked of her mother one afternoon.

"Why do you despair?" questioned Mrs. Hetherington.

"The more I try, the farther removed from the studio I seem to be. But I have not reached the point where I am ready to give up painting; and yet it may be that the Lord's business is so urgent that those of us who engage in it will not have much time for our pet specialties."

"May he help you to make the most of your gift!"

"Indeed, I will try, mother. I will do my best."

Chapter XXII

"I've Lost My Way"

The autumn wore on into October. The brown leaves upon the trees heralded the approach of winter; and when, upon quiet days, they came falling gently down upon the lawn, or, upon windy days, they came down in showers to carpet the green grass beneath, Bertha Hetherington looked out among them from her own window; and she felt a strange sensation of pain with every falling leaf. She seemed bereft of something most precious, even as the trees were stripped of their leaves. At first she knew not what it was she had lost. She only knew that she was in want of something that, shortly before, she had possessed. And she cast about to find what that something might be. She found it not, however, until one day when she went to the studio to begin a landscape that she had sketched the year before in one of her rambles among the hills near the university.

She prepared her paints, and took up her brush for the hitherto delightful task. Then she knew what she had lost. The revelation smote her like an arrow. Her hand seemed to have forgotten its cunning. Her soul, thus mysteriously emptied of that which long had been her controlling aspiration, as though not more than one passion at a time could hold her, became possessed of that which was a passion, indeed; a suffering, an agony.

She knew not whence it came nor whither it tended; but she knew it was there with crushing weight; and she bowed beneath it as one bends his head beneath the storm. All the warmth and light and love from her young life went out; and for the time she "walked in darkness." Thus she moved for days. Then she had a vision, which was not one of light or joy or gladness, but of the deepest, darkest gloom; and it swayed her, soul and body. She staggered beneath its awful power.

Her parents had noted, with solicitude, the trouble that was upon her; but they waited a little for her to speak.

One evening, after dinner, Mr. Hetherington met her in the hall, and her look of woe smote him. "Come, darling," he said tenderly, as he took both her hands in his, "can you come into the library now and tell me all about it? No one will disturb us, I think, to-night."

"I can try," she said, simply. "I doubt if you can help me, father," she began, after they were seated together.

"But I can try," was his answer, as he took her hand again in his.

"I do not know why I should be entangled in such a spiritual jungle. The way before me has always been so full of gladness, until this recent plunge into the wilderness. Somehow, I am smitten to the dust by the thought of the sin and sorrow of this lost world. A cloud, so dense that through it not a ray of light penetrates, continually hangs over me. O, father, it is just as dark as midnight! There is no hope. I do not understand it."

"It will not long be so, I think, dear."

"I do not know," was her reply. "I have tried in vain to pass out from under this cloud, until I have given up. I mean to let it hang there as long as it will, and even enwrap its chill folds about me. I shall only wait and suffer, until I know what there is in this for me. There must be a purpose in it, for it could not have come by chance."

"I wish," said her father, with emotion, "that that purpose might now be fulfilled, and that you might come back to us; for you seem to have gone away."

"Indeed, I am away from home. It is not home to me in this fearful gloom. In sunshine and peace is my home. But I wish to stay away until I know wherefore I am sent. Now, father dear, can you wait till I come back?"

"I shall wait with longing for you, Bertha; and be assured that, while the cloud enfolds you, its shadow falls on me."

"God grant it may soon lift!" she said, and, in a little while thereafter, went to her own room.

The light of the sun had faded entirely from the western sky, and, in its stead, the lights of the city were reflected upon the clouds. She sat down by her window, with her back to this reflection and her face toward the dark east, where the clouds hung heavy.

Half reclining in her chair, and looking out into the night, away out beyond the city's edge and the far horizon, into that fabled land where gilded temples rise and sacred mausoleums mark the resting-place

of honored dust, she saw—O, the withering sight that met her eyes! Distance was annihilated. The Orient seemed swung back toward the west, until it lay out there just before her; and she gazed upon it benumbed. There she saw a sin-shrouded world, its unfortunate millions plunging after all manner of gross superstitions, and making up the complement of lost souls that steadily stream into eternity. At every tick of the watch she saw the death-sweat upon the brow of one more wretched being whose soul was going out in darkness. She saw them dropping, dropping, dropping out somewhere, they knew not where, into an unknown and hopeless abyss; and she counted them as they dropped with startling rapidity. And yet, the millions upon millions that were left to grope and stumble on through weary years, until they, too, like their fellows, dropped out into the great unknown!

And Bertha Hetherington, sitting there in the window of her room that late October night, saw those millions in revolting, hideous, ghastly array, still struggling on. Many of them she saw poor and homeless, naked and starving. Among them she saw blighted girlhood, dishonored wifehood, crushed motherhood, broken and bruised and bleeding widowhood. Among them she saw, also, as a fit companion to this deplorable estate of woman, manhood, ignorant, tyrannical, debased, corrupt. Sunken was man to the low estate of the brute; and he was helplessly feeling his way in the dark, inflicting every kind of self-torture, making long and weary pilgrimages to wash his sins away in

some sacred river, often crawling miles, prostrate in the dust, to appease the wrath of his gods; or he was sitting by the way, week in and week out, with uplifted hands and fixed gaze, that he might find out the unknown God.

Among these sin-sick millions, she saw disease stalking relentlessly. They were at the mercy of the cholera, the leprosy, and the black death. She saw them the prey of wild beasts, of deadly cobras and stinging scorpions. She saw, also, those gilded temples, erected in the name of high heaven, the scenes of the most vile and unspeakable orgies by human beings in their nameless carousals. A picture heavy with spiritual death was that upon which she gazed. She saw, and marveled that God, in his holiness, could permit such iniquity. The problem of evil confronted her, as it has done many another, with mystery inexplicable. On the one hand, she saw this picture steeped in sin and death; and on the other, she saw God's love. Very far removed it seemed just then, and she could not reconcile the two.

So, with all this mystery upon her, she passed the next month, until winter was closing in.

"Here is a letter for you, Bertha," said her mother, one morning, as she came into the library where her daughter sat reading a sketch of Mr. Judson. "It is postmarked 'Bloomingdale.'"

"From cousin Lucy Edgecomb, possibly," said Bertha, as she took the letter. "O no, that is not her writing. I wonder whose it is?" as she curiously tore open the envelope. "Mrs. Hargrave writes it. I

am glad; now I shall hear from Christine. I only hope she is not sick." And she read the letter.

"What is it, dear?" asked Mrs. Hetherington, as she saw the color leave her daughter's cheek.

Silently she passed the letter to her mother, while she, herself, buried her face in her hands. "O, Christine! my poor, poor Christine!" she said. "She is lost; I know she is lost!"

"Why, Bertha, what do you mean? What has happened to Christine?" asked Mrs. Hetherington, in alarm; and she hastily read the letter.

"The poor child! what can we do?" she said at length.

"We must do something at once," replied her daughter. "Let me see; where is she?" again consulting the letter. "Number sixteen hundred and seven Water Street. Think of it! Christine Hargrave down there near the Central Station! O, it can not be true; there must be some mistake. She was such a beautiful girl. And yet, I always knew that she was somewhat trifling."

"Yes, Bertha; but I never dreamed she would come to this."

"No, indeed; nor I. She left Sunday-school six months ago under the pretext of going back to her beautiful country home near Bloomingdale. I have not forgotten the troubled look she gave me the day she said good-bye. I supposed at the time that she was grieving at the thought of parting with the friends she had in the city. I see, now, how remorseful must have been her sorrow. I had wondered that she did not write, as I asked her most cordially to do; and now,

here is her stricken mother asking me to help her if I can."

"Could you put her in the hands of Miss Jamison? She knows so well what to do."

"Almost any other case I could, but not this one. Do you notice, Mrs. Hargrave wishes me to go myself to Christine; for she is very defiant, and considers herself utterly abandoned. Her mother would come to her, but she thinks it would be useless. You know Christine always had such confidence in me. When she was in the store, I seemed better able to help her than did any one else. No; I must go myself; and I must go before night."

"Then I will go with you; but we must not go without your father. Was he to come home to lunch, did he say?"

"Not to-day, I understood," said Bertha; "but we must see him somehow; for another day must not pass before we get Christine out from that place. Suppose we telephone father we are coming, and meet him at the store at five o'clock?"

All day long great feathery snowflakes filled the air, and fell thickly down upon the brown earth. It was the first heavy snow of the winter. And while in the homes of the good and prosperous the cold storm without only added to the cheer and comfort within, yet in the homes of the poor and degraded it only multiplied their sorrow.

It had been Bertha's habit to experience keen delight in the falling of the wild and beautiful snow; and the more wildly it fell, and the more ominously the wind sounded in the dark woods, the more was

she thrilled. Even that morning, so beautifully it lay in its whiteness upon the lawn, she had stood looking down upon it with something of her wonted love. "How pure, and white, and beautiful!" she thought. "I wonder if there is any comfort in it for aching hearts." But when, later in the day, she looked away from her reading now and then out upon the snowflakes, whirling in ever-increasing wildness as the night drew on, she shuddered, "Poor Christine!" For to her, at that time, the earth, clad in its cold, white robe, seemed very like many of the good people of this world, who wrap their robes of righteousness about them, and let wounded hearts bleed out their lives alone.

So it was with peculiar emotion that she stood with her mother, as night drew on, in the great drygoods house, waiting for her father to accompany them upon their errand of mercy.

The car which they boarded a few minutes later was crowded with men and women of every condition in life. Some, ill-clad, rode that bleak afternoon as an unusual occurrence on the way to their wretched homes in the tenements; others, well dressed, were hurrying to the evening trains.

How gloomily, even as she had seen it in that fearful vision, rested the weight of the world's woe upon Bertha's mind just then, as they were whirled in the driving snow around the bluff and down into the noise and confusion and smoke of the West End.

They stepped from the car out upon Water Street. Across the river, from the north, blew the wind with piercing blast; and the shadows of night were falling.

"'Blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!'" thought Bertha, calling to mind a few lines from her favorite Scottish bard,

> "'And freeze, thou bitter, biting frost!
> Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
> Not all your rage, as now united, shows
> More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
> Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
> Than heav'n-illumin'd man on brother man bestows!"

This, as they hurried on in the shrieking wind and the blinding snow.

"What, not here!" as her father turned toward a dingy old bookstore.

"Yes; this is the number."

They stepped in. Two forlorn-looking men stood smoking before a little red stove in the rear of the room.

"Is this number sixteen hundred and seven?" asked Mr. Hetherington.

"Yes," said one of the men from within his cloud of tobacco-smoke.

"Could you tell me whether Miss Hargrave is here?"

"She might be in the lodgings above," said the man, with evident surprise at the presence of the two ladies.

"How shall we reach the lodgings?"

"You 'll have to climb that dark stairway from the street."

This they did, guided by a dim light through a transom over the door on the landing. At the top,

they entered a long, dingy, dimly-lighted, rickety old hall, with closed doors down its length on either side.

Mr. Hetherington touched a button at his right. Presently, from a door near by, stepped a burly woman, a coarse and most disgusting specimen. A huge mountain of corruption she seemed, as she stood before them.

"Is Miss Hargrave in? Could we see her?"

And the woman led the way whence she came, into a disorderly room, down two or three steps into another room as much disordered; where, by a rude little stove and a dim lamp in the farther corner, sat Christine.

At first sight of her old friends, a faint smile lighted her face; but it soon faded, and left her settled in such a crushed and hopeless state that all the efforts of the sympathetic Bertha availed naught.

"O, Miss Hetherington—"

"Call me Bertha, as you used to do."

"No, no; I can not. I am unworthy ever to speak that name again. Do not ask me."

"But I wish you would."

"Do n't ask me!" she said, almost fiercely; "for I will not do it. O, why did you come to this dreadful place?"

"I came to help you, Christine. I want you to come away with me."

"But I never could go with you. There is not the faintest gleam of hope in my heart. I 'm lost!"

"O, do not say that. I will help you; and we will make it all right."

"You are too late," said she, with a wicked smile. "It never can be made right."

"But I tell you, Christine, I will help you. You will not have to try alone."

"Yes, I know you would help me; but you are the only one who would do it. I have no confidence whatever in another living soul. If I were to appear on the street, any other one of my former friends would walk around a block to avoid me; and some of them, too, have souls as black as mine. O, it is not so much righteousness that this world has, after all. No; I shall never come out of here but to jump into the river. I just now returned from there. In the storm, I thought no one would see me; but as I stood upon the bridge, the waters looked so cold and angry that I did not dare to leap. But I shall plunge in some night; and all the devils in hell can't stop me."

And the hard lines in her face deepened, and her lips pressed tightly together, as she looked defiantly into the faces of her three friends.

"Some day I 'll relieve this weary world of the weight of my poor soul."

"But, my dear Christine, the world to come will hold your soul; and what then?"

"I do n't care what then!" was her reckless answer. "They can't do by me there worse than they 've done by me here." And she sunk back into settled despair, from which they tried in vain to move her.

"I 've lost my way; and I never again can find the path from which I strayed. I 'm lost, I 'm lost forever!"

"Remember," said Mrs. Hetherington, "if all other

friends forsake you, there is One who will not cast you off." But it kindled no ray of hope in the eyes of the once beautiful Christine; for she looked like one utterly abandoned of God and man.

And they went away from the lodgings, leaving one poor girl in great danger of losing whatever spark of womanhood may yet have smoldered in her breast. A later visit, however, did much for Christine, as the sequel will show.

Such an object-lesson as that half hour had been to Bertha Hetherington! She went to her own room early that night.

" 'The way of transgressors is hard,' " she thought, as she tried to forget the scenes of the afternoon. "And yet, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' O, that Christine might believe that promise this night!" And, with a prayer in her heart for the poor young woman down there in the lodgings on Water Street, she went to rest.

But in her dreams she would enter a dingy old bookstore, in her search for No. 1607; and being told that she must go to the lodgings above, she would climb a long, narrow, dark stairway; but before she would reach the top, the dim light behind the transom would go out, and she would lose her way. Then she would be down in the dingy bookstore again, and then wearily climbing the dark stairway, in her vain search for No. 1607. "O, where is No. 1607?" she cried, as she again entered the bookstore. "I 've lost my way, I 've lost my way; I can't find No. 1607." And again she would go cautiously up the lonely stairway. So,

from the store to the stairway, and back again to the store, and then up the stairs, she would go; but she could not find No. 1607, until, in her despair, she began to cry, and then she awoke.

That piteous wail in her dream, and the same wail of the poor lost Christine, the evening before, kept ringing in her thought, "I 've lost my way!" She did not sleep again that night; but lay a long time, thinking what that wail must mean to a human soul. At length, hearing Ann in the kitchen, she quickly dressed, and went down.

"O, Ann, will you please build a fire in the studio grate?"

"Why, yes, honey, I 'll do it right now, while I 'm waitin' for my stove to get hot."

"Thank you!" And, soon after, Bertha was in her long-neglected studio, arranging the paintings and draperies until the general effect pleased her. Then she drew her easel into place, and brought out palette, knife, pigments, and brushes. She stretched the canvas for painting. Then she took up her pencil to sketch.

O, if she only could put upon the canvas the vision that had burdened her heart for the last six weeks, and had reached its climax in the visit to Christine! If she only could! And, in her effort, a new light gleamed in her eye, and a new purpose burned in her soul. With a glow of enthusiasm, yet with all humility of spirit, she went about her task; for she felt that hers was a theme worthy the brush of a Titian or a Veronese. It was a theme that had filled her soul of late; and if she could vividly present its truth to

others, it would be no ignoble undertaking. Strange, how amid other duties she crowded in the hours with her brush. Days passed; yet no one of the family ventured to ask her what she did. But all were delighted to see her thus occupied.

"Bertha," said Mr. Hetherington, one evening, "I take it, the cloud has lifted."

"Hardly lifted, I should say. It is above me still; but I can see a purpose in it now. And so, even from its darkness, I gather inspiration. I believe it was God who, for a brief space, took away my gift. But he has returned it to me, and empowered me beyond anything that I ever knew before. I only wish I did not have to eat or sleep, so eager am I to realize my thought."

"What so engages you, Bertha? You arouse my curiosity."

"I suppose I do, father. I would like to tell you; but the moment I share the vision with others, I feel that my inspiration will be gone. It is not mine to give until I reveal it in the finished picture. I am sorry; but, rightly or not, I hold this vision as a sacred trust, not to be trifled with, even by sharing it with my nearest friends."

So they were content to await the time when they might look upon her completed work.

Weeks passed. Still no one shared the vision. With every stroke of her brush the artist felt new inspiration, and wielded new power—power to express her strange and fearful vision.

Months passed. Since that wild December night when there was mingled with her dreams the wail of

The Picture was Done

the poor lost girl, a whole winter had gone; and now the grass was green in the meadows, and the orchards were fragrant with bloom. The sun sent a stream of golden light through the open window of her studio; and a robin in an elm-tree near by poured out into the balmy morning air such a flood of rippling melody that it seemed to Bertha as though the whole earth were vocal with one majestic "Gloria in excelsis." The picture was done. As she stood looking upon it, she fain would have joined creation's song, "Gloria in excelsis;" for was not the glory due to Him? Had not He given her the vision and clothed her with the power to execute? Very humble she felt in that moment of triumph, for she seemed to herself to have done so very little.

What of the shadow within which she so long had been dwelling? Why, it had rolled away like the mist of the morning! And she saw not the actual sin-shrouded world, but by faith she saw the whole earth filled with His glory. She stood a moment, listening, as it were, to the song the angels sung the night the Savior was born.

Then the curtains parted, and her father and mother entered; for she had told them to come up that morning. No one spoke; for artist, studio, father, mother—all seemed forgotten in the overwhelming, magnetic truth that stood out in the picture. At length, drawing his daughter to him, the father kissed her. "My darling!" was all he said. Tears filled their eyes; and the sunlight, bursting anew from behind a passing cloud, streamed in wondrous benediction into the room; again the liquid notes dropped

from the open throat of the robin; and again sky and earth rang out the joyous "Gloria in excelsis! Gloria, gloria, gloria in supremis! Amen!"

"Bertha, dear," said her father, "such a vision! 'I 've lost my way!' Ah, yes, you have here a vision of the lost world—the awful portrayal of a world out of Christ."

Then they examined the details of the picture. Night was approaching; heavy storm-clouds, rolling up from the northwest, swept wildly across the sky. In the foreground, a somewhat tangled wood bent its tops in the gale as it bore down upon them; while here and there, between the trunks of the dark trees, one could easily catch glimpses of the river which, swollen by the mountain torrents leaping the rocks at the left, plunged angrily down the narrow valley between the woods and the foothills in the background. Over this raging stream, at the right, stretched a slender bridge; and from the bridge, on the farther bank of the river, a footpath wound by gentle curves along the green slope of the hills at the east up to a cluster of pines, beneath whose mournful soughing, one could easily suppose, nestled a cottage. Beyond and above the hillside to which the little home clung, rose majestic, snowcapped mountains. From the end of the bridge on this side the river a path led away, until it lost itself in the woods.

Striking as were the features of this wild landscape, with the storm and the night coming on, the interest of the picture centered in a young woman—in the agony of one who had strayed from home, and in the gathering darkness could not find her way

back. Her face was that of the unfortunate Christine. She stood in the edge of the woods; her clothing and her long, black hair were tossed in the wind, whose force almost threw her to the ground. Her clenched hands she pressed tightly to her temples, while she stared wildly at the ominous clouds, cleft by vivid flashes, whose constant glare cast a weird and fearful light over the whole scene.

To this woman—who had lost her way—the majesty of the distant mountains, the speed of the plunging river, and the power of the oncoming storm were full of terror. She could not find the way to her home up there among the pines. Here she stood, an unprotected, helpless woman, at the mercy of the elements. Her home, to be sure, was not very far away; but she was unable to find the path that led to it; and here were the night and the storm. Could she have looked down from the shelter of the little hillside cottage upon the tempest-swept river and wood, she could have gloried in the furious display of power. But here, with her head bared to the storm, and no way of escape, she was, indeed, lost. Though refuge was near, yet amid the roar and the tumult and the gloom, with no hand to guide her wandering steps, she could not find her way. The picture of a lost and ruined world, indeed!

Back of the picture, as they stood there that morning, they thought they heard and saw the reality. "I 've lost my way!" they heard the Chinese mother cry, as she flung her helpless babe into the lonely tower outside the city walls, there to perish amid the wasting forms of other innocent victims. "I 've lost

my way!" they heard the follower of Mohammed cry, as he crawled prostrate in the dust, to reach some distant mela. "I 've lost my way!" they heard the poor Mexican cry, as he flung his offerings of silver and gold before the shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The reality of a lost and ruined world, indeed!

"Alice," said Mr. Hetherington to his wife that night, as they sat on the porch in the glow of a warm spring twilight, "I thought I knew, before, something about what a lost world meant. But not in my whole life have I felt the weight of it as I have during the few hours of this day."

"That has been my experience," replied Mrs. Hetherington. "Wherever I have been, I have seen that fearful portrayal of a lost world."

"I have thought," continued her husband, "that we were doing about all we could; but if our responsibility is commensurate with our realization of the world's ruined and undone condition out of Christ, we shall have to do considerably more for its redemption than we have yet done."

"O, I have felt to-day, Ward, that we were not doing all that the awful condition demands."

"So have I. I do not know when I have so felt the responsibility of rightly using the silver and the gold."

"Yes," interrupted his wife, "the silver and the gold and the cattle on a thousand hills—the whole earth, and the fullness thereof, are the Lord's. His right to this material world is quite evident; but—"

"O, Alice, darling, do n't; please do n't! I can not bear it." And in the deepening twilight she saw the

sorrow upon the face of her noble husband; and she knew that she must not finish what she had in mind; for, indeed, he could not well bear it.

For a little they sat hand in hand, without a word, until Bertha came from Dr. Brower's, where she had dined with Rose after the day's outing. She made a place for herself on the seat between them. Usually, she would have begun at once an animated description of the day's exploits; but other thoughts were in her mind, and she easily fell into silence with her parents. She did not allow herself, however, to remain quiet long.

"Why so sober to-night?" she asked. Both instinctively drew her closer, as though she might escape their embrace.

"Tell us, Bertha," Mr. Hetherington forced himself to say, "what you two girls have been doing out in the country."

"Rose and I have had just the happiest, freest day out there among the squirrels and the wild flowers."

"Did you sketch?"

"We sketched one very pretty view of the river, just after sunset, on our way home. Our ride was really very picturesque."

"How far did you go?" said her father.

"You will be surprised to know that we went out beyond the little church near where that old man Jimmerson lives, the man that believes that missionaries are worth a hundred times as much as the cannibals that eat them up. I remember hearing you tell that of him. I suppose the poor man is raising potatoes to this day, and laying up money in the

bank instead of sending it for the conversion of those dreadful cannibals. I wish there was some way to reach such people's hearts, so that they could see that they had no right to hoard the King's money."

"Perhaps, there is your mission, Bertha," said her father, hoping that she might feel it so. "There are so many who are doing just what Mr. Jimmerson is doing. Possibly you might appeal effectively to some of them."

"I trust I might. May I tell you my plan?" with some hesitation.

"Not to-night, please, Bertha dear." For he felt what was coming; and he knew he was not ready for it. Soon she kissed them both good-night, and went to her room.

Somehow, she had come so very near to them, she was so much after their own heart, that her father had come to feel that she was theirs to keep; and he clung to her as the one who should comfort and support him in the years to come.

After Bertha had gone into the house, Alice put her arm around her husband's neck, and, drawing his face to hers, said softly, "It will all be right, darling; let us not be troubled."

"My brave Alice!" said he, with much affection; and, arm in arm, they went into the house; for all the light had faded from the west.

Chapter XXIII

"I've Found My Way"

EASTER morning, all nature seemed rolling out one joyous resurrection anthem: "The Lord is risen, is risen indeed!" The tender grass upon the lawn, the soft green leaves upon the trees, the warbling birds among their branches, the dewdrops, and the sunshine, all in one exultant strain, pealed forth the glad song. And hearts attuned to this sweet music heard, and rejoiced.

Not in years had there dawned for St. Paul's so propitious an Easter. The flowers about the altar, the singers in the choir, the people in the pews, and the good Dr. Brower himself, seemed to have caught something of the glory of the morning. From the first organ peal to the last word of the benediction, the risen Lord filled his temple. Emblematic, it all seemed, of the time when his sovereign right should be proclaimed throughout the world. And when the good doctor stood up and announced his text, "The kingdom is the Lord's," there came into the hearts of people and pastor such a fullness of joy and faith that it was easy to believe the day at hand when the earth should own his right to reign.

Uplifted though they were, however, by this vision of final triumph, they were yet made to feel that they, as well as all of God's people, were to bear a large part in preparing the way for this glorious

consummation. It could not be done in a day, nor by a few isolated laborers; but all, at home and abroad, must unite in one determined effort to overthrow the powers of darkness. On this glad morning of the resurrection, what more appropriate act than that his people should make a free-will offering to help enthrone their rightful King? Usurpers there were to be deposed; and we were the King's messengers to bear to the earth's deluded millions the news of the coming of their Lord.

"And now," continued the speaker, "I leave it to you, as faithful stewards of his treasure, to open your hearts, and give as he directs. Remember, this is to be a free-will offering, beyond the one-tenth that many of you are already giving. Your gifts, my friends, may be far more precious than money. The King himself will tell you what. Simply be his messengers." And as he, pausing, looked earnestly into their faces, a solemn stillness rested upon the audience.

"We will wait a little for the King to give you the message you are to bear." And in the silence that followed, offerings were laid upon the missionary altar that worlds could not have bought—gifts that nothing short of love for the King himself could have prompted. Surely, the Lord was present that morning. Some, of course, and many of them rightly, saw no more in the call for treasure than an increased gift of silver and gold. Two or three there were, however, who gave what was more to them than life itself. And when, just after the collection, the pastor, with tears in his eyes and an unwonted

tenderness in his voice, rose to ask God's blessing upon the gifts of his people, it seemed as though the very gate of heaven were lifted, and the glory of the Highest were streaming in benediction upon the assembled worshipers.

"O Lord," began the pastor, "accept these gifts from thy servants. May the silver and the gold be many times multiplied, until sufficient shall have been given to carry the tidings to all nations. And now, Father, we pray that thou wilt accept those other gifts—for we feel that some here have made them—those gifts that are beyond all price, those gifts so precious that nothing short of thy love could have commanded them. And wilt thou, O Lord, both for these and for all thy servants who have here given of their treasure, open the windows of heaven, and pour 'out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' May thy grace be upon thy people; and may thy kingdom come. For the Redeemer's sake. Amen!"

And when the benediction was pronounced, the great congregation was loath to break up, fearing to lose the influence of that holy Easter morning.

"This has been a great day for St. Paul's," said Mr. Hetherington at the dinner-table. "I never saw the people under such deep conviction. Men and women gave who have never given for this cause."

"Precious gift, that free-will offering from our people this morning," said Dr. Brower to Mr. Hetherington as they walked out of the church together after the evening service. "I tell you, my dear Hetherington, we are on the eve of a great awakening."

"I have felt of late," said Ward, "that that is just what is coming."

The next day, Bertha again went to her studio. Other duties had kept her so that she had not returned since that day the week before, when, with her father and mother, she had looked upon her finished work. This morning, alone before the picture she stood for many minutes.

"O, thought she, "what if the night here portrayed were never to end? What if this bewildered girl were never to find her way back? What if the darkness of this world were never to be penetrated? What if the loneliness, the unrest, the despair of ten hundred million souls were to continue on and on forever? Ah, but this darkness has been penetrated. The day-star of hope hangs in the eastern sky; and, sometime, upon these wandering millions shall the Light shine."

Then she took up her pencil to sketch a thought that had stood before her with all the power of the former vision; and for days she wrought as one who was doing a "great work," and could not "come down."

"Do you notice," said Ward to his wife one day, "how absorbed Bertha is again with her brush?"

"Yes, indeed, I do."

"I wonder what occupies her now?"

"She has not said."

"Do you know how she feels about going to Europe next fall? When I last mentioned the idea to her, she did not take to it kindly. I wish we could prevail upon her to go."

"She never has spoken to me of a desire to go," said Alice. "Possibly she thinks this country will afford her all the advantage she needs."

"I fear she does," said Ward; and he arose and left the room.

Alice looked longingly after him. "Poor man!" thought she. "How hard it is for him to bear!"

The passing months again brought the early autumn—the time of gathering harvests. Cornfields and orchards stood ready for the laborers. Bertha, alone in her studio, was putting the last touches upon another picture. During the summer she had sought to place upon canvas the vision of hope and love that had taken the place of the former vision of darkness; and, at last, the second painting was finished and put beside the first. In it were the same woods, river, mountains, narrow bridge, and footpath, leading to the hillside home. In it was the same girl; but O! the peace and joy that beamed in her face! For the night had passed, the clouds had scattered, the wind had died, and the early morning sun had set on fire the snowcapped mountains at the right, and was reflecting its glory in the torrent at the left, while from the pendent boughs of the dripping trees fell sparkling drops upon the grass beneath. And the girl! With her feet again in the homeward path, she was just emerging from the woods, while, pointing to the cottage up there among the pines, she paused, and looked back to say, "I've found my way!" All a vivid portrayal of a world brought to its Redeemer! There, with the best light of the studio falling upon them, hung the two pictures—the

lost world on one side, the saved world on the other.

The artist wanted to call her father and mother at once; yet she hesitated; for when she brought them to see those two pictures together, she wanted to tell them what was in her heart, and she feared they were not ready. So at lunch she told them that she had just finished a painting, and would be glad to have them go up and examine it if they liked, while she went out to see the little cripple in the flats, to whom she was giving a few simple lessons in drawing.

"Won't you go with us, dear, and explain the picture?" said Mr. Hetherington.

"It will explain itself, I think, father. I told the little fellow Sunday that I would not fail him. But to-night, if I may, I would like to have your opinion of my work during the last five months. Good-bye; I must go."

And Mr. and Mrs. Hetherington went to the studio. They stood amazed and speechless before that masterpiece of their daughter's genius. Her skill in landscape had been acknowledged—landscape was her delight—but in the work before them was something indescribable, something almost fleeting—to be felt, but not seen; something far transcending mere landscape; something appealing to faith and love; something like the halo of the holy Christ. Here was a world, redeemed, purified, made fit to be a temple for his indwelling. This girl, so late submerged in darkness, now with the light of a ransomed soul in her face, with all nature resplendent around

her, stood there, a sublime emblem of Christ's redemptive power.

"What do you think this means, Alice, dear?" asked Ward in husky tones as he drew her to him.

"Do you mean to ask what the picture teaches?"

"No, not that; I can see what it teaches. But what does it signify that she should have chosen this theme?"

"May I tell you, Ward? Can you bear it? I feel that you already know; but can we talk about it now?"

"Yes, dear. I have fought against it as long as I can. I must hear now whatever there is for me to know." And they sat down together, while the mellow autumn sunlight fell softly in through the west window. "I do not have to return to the store this afternoon. Let us settle this question that has been pressing so long for an answer."

"I have felt for years," said Alice, with a loving look into her husband's troubled face, "that probably Bertha would respond some day to the missionary call. I once strove so fiercely against going myself that, when finally it was not required of me, I felt that I must never again rebel. Somehow, though I did not breathe it to others, I thought, when first I looked into her little face and felt the sweet joy of a mother's love, that it would some day be our first-born, perhaps our best-beloved, that the Lord would ask. And from that moment I have held her in trust, feeling that she was ours but for a time. And with that thought before me, I have felt that nothing was too good to bestow upon the Lord's chosen.

Every triumph with her brush, as improbable as it may seem, was, to my mind, that much treasure put by for the Master's use. I know what many will say—that all this talent has been wasted. But I do not think so. No equipment, I take it, is too good for his service. Somehow, all through the life of our daughter I have been able to see that she was working, unconsciously to herself no doubt, toward this decision. And so, of course, I have been prepared for it, as much as we can be prepared for such an event, whenever it should come. How is it, dear, with you? Does it seem more than you can endure?"

"O, Alice, I sometimes think that I do wrong to love all of you so; but I can not help it. I do not love hastily; but when I do love, it is for all time. Nothing short of a miracle could make me willing to part with one of the children. As for giving you up, I think that the Lord saw that I could not do it, when he so graciously left you to me. You are just my life. If you were not here, I do not know what I could do." And as he drew her close to him, she saw in his eyes the same longing that she saw that winter evening, years before, when first he told her of his love; and in her face he met the same trustful response.

"When you were spared to me," he continued, "I thought that I could never again be asked to make a sacrifice that I would feel. If I had you, I thought I had everything. If I were not required to give you, I thought there was nothing I could give; but I did not know. Now I must give our child. Certainly that

is not like giving you, though it is next to it. But then, if I could endure all the sorrow of parting myself, and protect you and Bertha, it would not be so hard."

"O, you certainly would not deprive us of a share in the blessedness of giving!"

"Of course, I could not, if I would."

"Although I have been prepared for this, as I said, the thought of parting has seemed unbearable. Yet if the time comes for us to part with her, I am sure I shall be able."

"I wish I could look at it as calmly as you do. But the thought of her going had never occurred to me until that evening in the spring, soon after she finished her former picture, when you began to say something to me out on the front porch, and I begged you not to tell it. Then, that Easter morning, I thought we were both led, without saying so to each other, to give our most sacred treasure, if it were asked of us. But, somehow, during the summer months, and her absorbing attention to painting, I had grown away from the idea, and had come to feel that perhaps her work was here after all, and that only our faith was being tried. Has Bertha said anything about it herself?"

"No, darling; but I can see it in almost all she does. I have seen her look at us, when she did not think we saw, with such a pitiful yearning in her eyes. Then I have seen her once or twice, apparently under deep emotion, leave the room where we were sitting, and after a while return, looking as though a storm had passed over her. I think, too, that she

did not want to be with us this afternoon when we first looked upon this picture."

"I did not think of that," said Ward.

"You notice, she wants us to come into the studio to-night with her, ostensibly to criticise her picture, but really, I feel, that she may know our mind upon the important question of her life-work."

"Much as I have dreaded the mention of this subject," said he, "I feel that we shall all be happier to have it settled. I wish that she would come now. I want to talk with her before I see any one else."

And while, for a little, they sat in silence, the curtains parted, and Bertha stepped softly in.

"O, I hope you will forgive me if I am intruding. I thought, if you were here, you might like to make your points on the picture before dinner and possible interruptions."

Coming in, as she had, from a long walk, her cheeks aglow with health, and her dark hair clustering in curls about her face, it seemed to her father and mother, as she drew up a low stool at their feet, that she never before had looked so beautiful.

"Is it the picture, on which you want points?" said her father, half playfully.

Then, looking from one face to the other, she knew she might speak; and answering her father's smile, she said, "Why, yes—after a while, but—something else first, if you will."

"Speak as you feel, dear; for I think now we can hear whatever you have to say."

"Do you remember last spring, that night when

I began to tell you something that you thought you could not bear?"

The gentle pressure of her father's hand upon hers was her answer, and she went on.

"That day, out in the woods with Rose, while she gathered wild flowers, I sat upon a grassy knoll under a spreading oak, and looked down over the tree-tops that line the bluff, out upon the river to the hills beyond. Then I thought of the picture of darkness that I had just finished, and suddenly it changed in my thought to one of light; and that, I saw, was the saved world. And I was taken with a longing to see that also on canvas; but at once there flashed upon my mind one strange condition of success. I tried my best to evade it, but to no avail. At every effort to execute my thought, my hand seemed held; so that for days I worked with no power, until I feared, as once before, that my skill had taken wings. I would have come to you; but I knew I must not come with what would be harder for you to bear than for me. So I finally settled it. I said that if He would empower me for the execution of the picture that I so longed to paint, I would do whatever he asked. And from that hour the mist that had dimmed my vision rolled away, and the shackles fell off; and I felt inspired by the Holy One. I was given a breadth of vision far exceeding that with which I first set out. Whatever is wrought into that picture has been put there under sacred contract. If he has kept his part of the agreement, and I fully believe that he has, I must keep mine. I want to be a missionary. With all my heart I want to go to the lost of earth,

and help them find their way home. This is not a bitter cup that I am about to drink; it is running over with sweetness. And yet, I confess, there is a little bitter in it. It is very hard when I think of parting with all of you, and hardest when I think of you, my father and mother. But I am convinced that God will not ask of us more than we can bear. And I must go! Woe is me if I go not."

"God bless you, my daughter!" said her father. "But I must say that the cup does not overflow with sweetness to me now. It is still very bitter, though he makes the bitter bearable. I look for a time when he may take it all away. If not, I am content to suffer. His will first, always."

"But I do not want you to suffer for my sake."

"Then, dear, let us suffer for his sake; for we surely must suffer. The gift, I take it, would be far less precious if it cost us nothing. But I trust that, through suffering, we shall come at length to rejoice, and that our lives will make sweeter music for the hidden pain."

And he kissed the hand that lay in his, and, rising, led his wife and daughter to the window; for faint shadows had begun to creep into the corners of the studio. Away to the west, beyond the solid business blocks and the high church towers, the sun lay upon the far horizon.

"To think," said Bertha, "that as he closes his eye to us he opens it upon millions who have utterly lost their way! Will it not be worth while to have a part in helping them find it?"

For whose is it but ours to tell the Chinese mother

to bring her babe to Christ, whose holy religion has alone taught the world the value of a little child? Whose is it but ours to teach the follower of Mohammed that not by self-torture, but by loving self-sacrifice to the Son of God, is salvation to be obtained? Whose is it but ours to tell the deluded Mexican that no mythical Virgin protects him from the wrath of Christ, but that Christ gave himself a ransom for all mankind?

Ah, the day was coming—they felt it, those three who stood there among the gathering shadows in covenant with God—the day was coming when the cry of a lost world should give way to the triumphant song of a redeemed world, "I 've found my way! I 've found my way!"

Chapter XXIV

A Living Link

It was near evening of a November day. In one week the steamship *Aurora*, bound for the far East, would set sail from Vancouver. Though two thousand miles away, the sailing of that vessel was the subject of conversation among the people of St. Paul's Church; for it was to bear across the uncertain deep into the more mysterious depths of heathen darkness the greatly-beloved Bertha Hetherington. It was hard to have it so. The whole Church felt sad; for she had visited them when sick, prayed with them when tempted, wept with them when they wept, rejoiced when they rejoiced. Thus sympathizing with them, and encouraging them, she had become to many almost indispensable. Strong men wept when they heard of her going; mothers in their closets at night remembered that other mother's daughter; and some who had waxed cold, overborne by the cares of this world, when they beheld her heroic self-giving, came anew into the secret place of the Most High. Few had attempted to dissuade her; for nearly all felt her call to be theirs.

All day long the Hetherington household has been astir with preparations for Bertha's departure on the morrow. Now that the work is done, and the night is at hand, an almost unbearable stillness pervades every room.

Lewis, sitting alone in the bay-window, looks out toward the west. He is the same buoyant, handsome, high-spirited youth who left college two and a half years before,—the same, and yet not the same; for this decision of Bertha to give her life to China has made a profound impression upon him, and, during the last six months, has caused him more sober thoughts than he had indulged before in all the previous years of his life.

"You are foolish; you are throwing yourself away," he would say to her again and again; and she would simply reply, "If I throw myself away in China, I shall leave it to you, Lewis, to do what I should have done here;" and he would have nothing to answer; for, although he was an upright young man, he knew that, so far as any active good went, he was almost throwing his life away in his own land. Certainly, then, his sister was not to be censured. Sitting thus in the window, he began to play the guitar, his rich, deep voice—deeper and richer for the touch of sadness in it—joining the mellow strains:

> **"Nearer, my God, to thee!**
> **Nearer to thee;**
> **E'en though it be a cross**
> **That raiseth me."**

While he was singing, Bertha stole softly in, and stood behind him with her hand on his shoulder. He sung the hymn through.

"Say, Bertha," said he, as he stopped playing, "I just can't have it so; you must n't go." So saying, he took her hand in his, and drew her into a chair

next to him. She could not speak a word, and was about to go away; but he held her. "Just a minute, Bertha; let 's sing a little, if we can."

"I do not think I can," said she; "though I might try it, if you will wait."

At that time, Mr. and Mrs. Hetherington were in their own room. She, sitting in the west window, ever and anon lifted a very sober face to the light of departing day. The poplar-trees, tall and bare, except as an occasional dry leaf fluttered on its stem, stood against the west. The sky was overspread with clouds, and low on the horizon lay a narrow strip of red, left there in the evening twilight. It was one of those cold, far-off sunsets, occasionally seen in a November sky. Ward sat near by looking over a few articles in preparation for his journey the next day; for he was to accompany Bertha to the coast. As he sat thus employed, strains of music reached him from below. With voices richly blending, the two children accompanied the soft notes of the guitar. He stopped his work to catch the words:

> "Love divine, all love excelling,
> Joy of heaven, to earth come down!"

He listened till they had finished.

"O, Alice," said he, "that word Love! What is love? I know so little of what it is. Of course, I know that I love my wife and my children; but love—the love the Father showed when he gave his only Son to redeem a rebellious world—who can fathom that love? And yet we are to be like him if we shall see him as he is; we are to love this world to

the extent of our most treasured gift. His best-beloved, his only Son, co-equal, co-eternal with himself, he gave to save a ruined world; and I find it so hard to give my eldest daughter. O Love, what art thou?" And he bent forward, and buried his face in his hands; and in the silence Alice heard tears fall on the newspaper lying at his feet.

Meanwhile, the singing below having ceased, Bertha stole away to her studio. She wanted to go to that sacred spot once more before she left for her long absence. A cheerful fire was in the grate. She stood looking at her paintings,—the two that had cost her such heroic sacrifice. She saw them dimly in the faint glow from the western sky and the wavering light falling around her from the burning wood. While she thus stood before the pictures, her father slipped quietly in, and, coming up to her, laid his hand gently upon her shoulder. Standing awhile in silence, they turned, and, dropping the curtains behind them, went down into the room where her mother sat, talking comfortingly to Harold and Carlotta.

"It is time for us to go now, I think," said Mr. Hetherington, "if some one will speak to Lewis." For an informal reception was to be given to Bertha at the church that night; and they all set out, Mr. and Mrs. Hetherington taking the lead, and their children following a little space after. Shortly before reaching the church, they passed within the shadow of the great cathedral. The chimes were playing "How firm a foundation." In tones strong and sweet rang out the music from the high tower. Such a message of courage and assurance! "How firm a

foundation"! Could not they afford the gift, with the everlasting promise of victory? They passed in silence beneath the chimes as the gracious notes rolled down into their hearts.

"Were those the angels, Alice?"

"I could almost hear them singing," she replied. "Let us take it for their song, and believe. He asked us for our gift, and we gave it; and he is able to keep what we have committed unto him."

"Your faith is sublime, Alice; I only wish mine were like it."

"A little patience, dear," said she, "and you will feel all right about this."

"I hope so;" and they entered the church.

It was a bleak November night outside, but all was warmth and comfort and cheer within; for loving hands had filled the altar with palms and chrysanthemums, and on the pulpit desk stood bouquets of roses.

As Mr. Hetherington and his family walked two-thirds the way down the aisle, and took seats in their accustomed place, one and another of the already large audience began softly to sing,

> "The morning light is breaking,
> The darkness disappears,"

until the music was swelled into a volume of voices in the last stanza,

> "Blest river of Salvation,
> Pursue thine onward way;"

and Dr. Brower said, "Amen!"

Meanwhile the large auditorium had become crowded to the doors by a company, the *personnel*

of which was an interesting study. Mrs. Galbraith, Mrs. Fenton, Mrs. Chandler, Mrs. Claymore, and Ward's mother were among the venerable women present. All the while a little, pale-faced fellow with a crutch sat upon the front seat, looking as though his heart would break; and away at the rear of the church, beneath the gallery, sitting in the shadow of a pillar, was a sad-eyed, yet beautiful young woman, who would not have had the courage to stay had not Bertha, on entering the church, gone to her with the cheering words, "O, I am so glad to see you!" and she also added, "I want to speak with you before you go; please, do not forget;" and the wounded woman stayed to hear what her friend had to say; and hearing, Christine Hargrave was comforted. Here and there in the audience were some of the elegant ladies who, seven years before, had enjoyed the social innovation with Bertha and her mother. And if we were at that moment to have been swayed by prophetic vision, we should see not only St. Paul's missionary offering doubled within the first year, but because the quickened life of one Church is felt by all the others, we should see that St. Paul's did not stand alone in her benefactions; but other Churches, rich, and powerful, and aristocratic though they had been, would open their hearts, and their pulsation would be felt to the uttermost of earth's habitations.

Two features of the program that night were memorable: The doctor's prayer, in which he held that vast audience before the Throne, and made them feel—every one of them—that they were to help bring the lost people of this world back to their Lord; and

the unanimous action of the Woman's Missionary Society, which made Bertha Hetherington a "living link" between that organization and the far-away people of China.

So St. Paul's Missionary Auxiliary entered into that blessed union with their sisters on the other side of the waters; a "living link" bound them—a link stronger than iron, more precious than gold; and the problem was solved, which had been long in Mrs. Galbraith's mind—how to bring the women in heathen lands near enough to the women at home to make the latter feel responsibility for their sisters' salvation. The distance had seemed so great that it was hard for many of the women here to understand their relation to those there; but how different now, with one of their own best-beloved standing as a living bond between them! A token it seemed, feeble, to be sure, but none the less a token, of the link between us and the Father, the Man Christ Jesus.

Several days later, just before the *Aurora* weighed anchor at Vancouver, when Mr. Hetherington arose to leave Bertha, he placed his hand in benediction upon her head, saying, with tears in his eyes, what he could not have said a short time previous, "I thank God that he counts me worthy to give a daughter to this blessed service." Soon after, he stood with others, watching the good ship sail majestically over the waves, until the sun, dipping behind the waters, shot a path of gold across the sea—prophetic, it seemed to him, of the time when the Sun of Righteousness should rise in glory full upon the dark abodes of men everywhere. Once more, turning one last

lingering look upon the departing *Aurora*, and praying that the God of the ocean would guide her safely over the waters, he walked away.

Completing her voyage in safety, Bertha became one of the heroic band of workers in the Foochow Mission; and every ship that sailed thereafter brought from her most welcome tidings.

"Alice," said Ward one day, "has it seemed to you that Carlotta was in any way filling the void left by Bertha?"

"Yes; I saw it almost immediately. I rather think we have both found her more to us during the last six months than ever before; and I am sure we are not the only ones who have found it so."

"You think not?"

"You remember that little crippled boy to whom Bertha used to give drawing lessons?"

"Very well."

"I thought he never would become reconciled to his loss until one day when Carlotta spoke to him, and asked if he would like to learn to play his mother's organ. Since then he has seemed perfectly happy. Carlotta could not teach him drawing; but she could teach him music, and she has brightened his life as her sister had done. She has been rather diffident, and while Bertha was here to take the lead she stood back. Bertha's going seems to have been what Carlotta needed, to bring out her latent powers."

"Yes, I see, dear, how much good you can get out of it. What could we have done without these compensations? We never could have lived, for it was almost like taking my life to let her go."

"Yes, I know."

Others, too, beside the little cripple, had been cheered by Carlotta's help. One of them was Christine Hargrave, who was glad to be introduced to Carlotta, with the assurance that the latter would befriend her, and help her in her difficult and important work.

Midsummer had come. All day long the farmers about Bloomingdale had been busy in their wheat harvest; and sheaves of the golden grain stood thick on many a gentle slope. Cattle were leisurely feeding in the pastures; and the quails were singing "Bob White" in the meadows. It was near sunset, as a beautiful young woman turned into the country churchyard, shut in by the woods away from the sight of the reapers. She walked reverently toward a little grave at the west of the church. Loving hands through all the years had kept a white rosebush there; and now the roses were in bloom. She stooped to breathe their fragrance; then she stood and looked long at the mound. She thought of all that had come into her life since that autumn day, years ago, when her tears fell into the open grave where they laid her playmate; and her tears fell again upon that grave, grown green through many a summer's sun and rain. "O, if he had only lived!" she thought; "and yet I should not have been worthy of him; but, maybe, he would have helped me to be good. O, that I could have gone with him!"

And the sun behind the hills, beyond the hickory-nut trees, fell to rest, while the glow of his setting flamed athwart the western sky, and, covering the

meadows and wheat-fields, the forests and the pasture-land with a flood of mellow light, fell in benediction about the troubled woman. Over the wrongs and the sorrows of this world the merciful heavens were bending; and with a prayer that some day beyond the mists she might meet her friend, she turned her feet again into the highway that led toward home. Her mother stood waiting for her by the gate.

"Christine, dear, I was worried about you."

"O, I am very sorry, mother, but I lingered a little by the way."

"I do not wonder, with the beauty of the sunset resting, as it did, upon the peaceful hills. I knew you would see and delight in it; but you know I can't help thinking a little anxiously about you sometimes."

"I know, mother, dear;" and she kissed the smooth forehead.

"But here is a letter I just brought from Bertha."

"The dear girl!" said the mother. "May the Lord bless her!"

"Yes; and keep her, and bring her back to us!" added Christine, fervently. "I do not think that I should have had the courage to keep on with my work in the city if it had not been for her. Indeed, I sometimes believe that I should have given up if she had not gone; for I have thought that if she could do what she is doing away out there in those villages of China, hundreds of miles from a single friend, going in among those people in their repugnant uncleanness, and kneeling beside them in their sickening filth, so that she herself must afterward go apart and wash the vermin from her own body—and all that from

love for Christ and the people for whom he died—if she could do that, I certainly could work in the city, only a few hours away from this delightful country home, where I can come occasionally to revive my drooping courage; for you, mother, always understand how to brace me when I am down."

"Thank you, daughter." Then, after a silence, "You think you must go back to-morrow?"

"Yes, mother, I really must."

"Every time you come home, it is harder for me to let you go."

"But you know you don't need me, mother, dear, as long as Mary is home; and it may be that I can do a little good there. Then, too, Mary has been a better girl to you than I have been."

"But, Christine darling, it is n't the child that has the smoothest path that a mother loves best. You can't understand that, but so it is; and my heart yearns for you when you are away; yet I would not detain you; for, evidently, the Lord has work for you there in the cruel city."

"O, mother, sometimes it does seem so cruel, that I almost long to die. Those who have never lived there can't imagine what an undercurrent of misery and crime and degradation there is; and many who do live there only catch a glimpse of all that is beneath the glimmer."

As they sat thus chatting upon the front porch, they saw Mr. and Mrs. Latimer, both stooped with age, but beautiful in their devotion to each other, pass the house on their way home from the pasture. The mother saw the daughter's face darken as the

two old people went by, and she understood when Christine said, "What a staff he would have been to them in their old age if he had lived!" Neither spoke for a time; but both were back in thought to that autumn day when the little girl stood tremulously in Mrs. Latimer's door, asking if Jamie were better. Meanwhile the old people, passing Mrs. Hargrave's, entered their own home, and, as was their custom, looked up to the little jug upon the mantel, which had never, in all the years since Jamie left, failed to contribute the sum necessary to keep a native preacher working for his people in India.

. . . . . .

Six years had passed since the sailing of the *Aurora*. As we predicted, St. Paul's Church, thus bound to the great, sorrowing world by a most precious "living link," within the first year had doubled her usual missionary contribution. During the second year, she very nearly doubled that of the first, and so on in nearly geometric increase during the first four years; after which time, also, her gifts annually increased by a considerable amount. It was marvelous, almost beyond belief, what this Church had accomplished. The field that seemed so distant and unapproachable was brought right to their very side. It was easy to offer help. As many a one said, "Why, there is no foreign field now; it has all come right to our door."

After an absence of six years, Bertha was home on leave. She returned from China with her arms full of sheaves. Sowing and reaping, she had been. Coming back, she stood beside some who had been

her companions a few years before—some who had sighed over the wasted talent when she went away. She, with the color gone from her cheeks, it is true, stood beside those fresh young women who had stayed at home, and embroidered, and painted, and shopped, and visited—stood beside them, how? Towering above them in all that makes woman great! Her own hands had smoothed away the wrinkles of care; her own tears had fallen with the tears of the sorrowing, penitent daughters of China; her own lips had told the blessed story of their redemption, bought when ours was bought by the crucified Son of God; her own eyes had seen these people coming to their Lord and ours. Blessed privilege! What could weigh over against all this, even had she won the fame of a Raphael!

It is something to be courted for skill with the needle, or at the piano, or with the brush, or for wit in conversation, and gentleness and grace of manner in the drawing-room; it is something to rise to distinction in a chosen profession. But it is more, far more, to unbind the bruised and bleeding feet of the daughters of China; to comfort the mothers who, without one ray of hope, cast out their dying babes into the street, to be gathered up in the early morning by the man with his cart, as he goes his dismal round before dumping his load into the heap of refuse outside the city walls; to speak the word that shall bring peace to the sorrowing heart of woman in all the dark corners of the earth. Ah, yes! it is far more to them, and more to us, and more to Christ! It is more now, and it shall be more to all eternity!

Chapter XXV

"Why are They so Long in Coming?"

One piteous question had again and again been asked of Bertha by the Chinese women—a question that she never could answer, and one that had caused her much heart-searching, lest she were in any way culpable. Indeed, it used often to leave upon her mind a sense of guilt, although we may be sure it was not personal guilt, but the guilt of her own people that smote her. And she returned to America with that question upon her lips; for she felt it, too, even as did the women of China, "Why are they so long in coming?"

To her own home people, indeed, she returned with rejoicing; for had they not been coming, coming, coming, until it seemed that the whole Church were enlisted after the manner of the Moravians? But she visited many congregations at the call of their pastors, where that question was uppermost in her mind; and she once said, in a moment of astonishment at their apathy, "Why, I would rather work among the heathen in China!"

Thus going from Church to Church in the city and in the towns about, she had nearly passed the months of her furlough, when, before leaving for China, she was asked to visit again the West-side, in order to make one final appeal to that rich and influential Church. It was the pastor himself who

was waiting in Mr. Hetherington's parlor for her reply to that invitation.

"I seem to have but little influence with your people," said she; "yet if you think best, I will try."

"Thank you! I shall look for you next Monday night."

A far more difficult task lay before her than to tell the gospel story to the ignorant and idolatrous women of China—more difficult to secure the co-operation of those who had long held his oracles than of those who were but babes in knowledge and faith.

When she again stood before them, her anxiety reached its climax. "Why are you so long in coming?" she asked.

"Think of their needs, friends! It appalls me when I try to tell you! Their one overwhelming need is the Savior. Wanting him, they want everything. Life is an enigma, death a terror, the future a mystery. They will listen hour after hour to the story of Jesus, and then when we, through weariness, would stop, they cry: 'Tell us more! Tell us enough so we can believe!' They never heard words so sweet, and it meets their longings. Then, when they come to know more about him, they can not understand how it is that we have been so long in coming. One woman who had just killed her two children because she wished them to escape her misery, when she heard of Jesus, asked at once, 'Why did n't you come sooner?' And, friends, I could not tell her why; I can not tell now!

"O, if you listen, can not you hear them—those far-

away, discouraged, and lost children? Those of us who have been among them, and seen them in their hopeless battle, and heard their bitter wail, never get so far away but that we hear it still. It is unspeakably sad and reproachful—the same, and ever the same, it seems to me, as its pitiful sound falls on my ear: 'Why are they so long in coming? We have been waiting for them. It is so dark, we are so poor and know so little, we can not find our way. Nineteen hundred years! And they have n't come yet! Why, O why, are they so long in coming?'

"Friends, do you catch that far-off voice to-night? They have cried unto their idols; yet their idols can not answer them, nor save them out of their trouble. And what is all this crying unto idols, but a seeking after God? What is this unsatisfied yearning in their souls, but their need of a Savior? Yet they have failed to find him. Would that his people might tell them!

"Perchance," she continued, "some of you have stood in the silent hours, when that which was dearest to you in life was passing beyond the reach of your poor love. But even then it was not that 'land of the shadow of death,' where dwell those miserable multitudes. Through the shadow that fell upon you, you could see a 'great light.' Shall we who know the consolations of the gospel harden our hearts and stop our ears to their bewildered cry? God forbid!

"The other night a worker from India said to an audience like this, that there are thousands of people in that land ready for baptism, if there were only those to teach them; and that, if they could all be baptized at

once, there would be as many thousands more standing ready to-morrow. And yet, I suppose his audience went home and slept the whole night through in peace. But the burden does not rest as lightly upon those who, at the front, are battling against heathenism.

"We take up a paper, and read that some woman in a certain town in a distant State has passed away. There is nothing in that to touch our hearts; we did not know this woman, and we do not know her friends. Again, the Death Angel enters a home—this time your home or mine—and he takes away our mother. Ah! now our hearts are touched; now we feel keenly the loss of one sweet face from our hearthstone. Across the seas, three millions a month are dying without God. Picture it! Listen to this great army tramping by! Since I left China a year ago, I have listened to the tread of twelve such armies, in their hopeless march to the tomb! Just to hear the name of Jesus would put courage into many a fainting heart.

"Then, why do you wait? Why not help them with your money, your prayers, and, if need be, your very lives? O, ye Christian people, once more listen! Do you not hear that distant, sorrow-laden cry? Japan's sons and outraged daughters are calling to you to save them; China's infants are moaning piteously; India's devotees and widows are pleading; Africa's dark children stand with arms outstretched toward you. Hear you not the voices of earth's poor, outcast, crushed multitudes, crying in the darkness, 'Come and help us?' Why are you so long in coming?

"Can it be, think you, that this work of salvation could go on too fast? Think you that we could give

too much, so that it would be done too quickly? Is not now the accepted time? Will to-morrow be better? or next year? or the next century? Would it jar, think you, with his eternal law of love, if those who have known him should at once fill his coffers with silver and gold, so that, without delay, the gospel might be heralded to the ends of the earth?

"If not—and I know you say not—then heed this cry! Pray over it! Work! Give! Give time and money! Sacrifice some of life's luxuries, and, if need be, necessities! Give your sons and daughters; yea, if God wills, give yourselves! Sacrifice now; for, every day you wait, one hundred thousand souls pass into eternity!

"Above all the sin, despair, and death, we still hear, however faintly, that bitter wail of a lost world: 'Why are they so long in coming?'

> **'O ye who are saved from the bondage of sin,**
> **Up, up at the voice of your Lord!**
> **There are wandering souls for you to call in,**
> **Ye are workers together with God.'"**

Much more Bertha Hetherington said that night, though she herself seemed to have done nothing. In talking of it afterward, people seldom spoke of her, but of Him whom she had exalted. And many a man and woman went away from the meeting to hear, in their work by day, and their dreams by night, that pitiful cry: "Why are they so long in coming?" Many of them heard it, until they gave largely of whatever was required. And in one case the gift was a son of great promise, who had waited a whole year for the

consent of his proud father and mother to go to Africa. Later that evening, when all in the Hetherington home had retired except Ward and Alice, they two sat down in their own room together.

"Ward," said she, after a little silence, "how does it seem to you now? Which would you prefer, that she paint a famous Madonna, or move people as she did to-night?"

"Why, Alice, there is no comparison."

"Have not the last seven years really been the most blessed of our lives?"

"Yes," said Ward, "and the happiest, too. God has verily opened 'the windows of heaven' to us."

In a few days, Bertha departed for Foochow, glad to go, but profoundly troubled over the great and pressing opportunity that the Church was failing to meet. A few days after reaching her destination, she wrote to her father: "I look out over these fields so white, and the laborers so few that the harvest lies ungathered. I meet some of the people whom, in former years, I led to Christ. One of the more simple and trusting among them, when she saw me, said eagerly: 'Are they coming now? Did they say they would come when you told them how much we need them?' And, father, what could I say to her? I scarcely dared say they were coming in such numbers as this long-suffering country needs; and yet I could not tell her they were not coming, for she evidently believed they were. She had thought that it was only necessary to tell our people, and they would surely come. And so I just believed, too, and said: 'Yes,

mother, I think they are coming.' And, father, they must come. Surely, the sons and daughters of our noble land will come. This sorrowful wail is in their thought. How can they escape it?"

Mr. Hetherington read the letter; then, as his wife entered the room, he handed it to her, saying: "Well, Alice, there is something more yet that we must do. You suggested it the other day, and we must come to it soon."

. . . . . .

Again the months and years rolled by, and the contemplated gift had not been made. Bertha was nearing the end of her second term of service in China, when she must of necessity again seek her native land for rest and health. Our friend, Mr. Thomas, whose career since leaving America we have not followed closely, was approaching the time when he must quit India altogether, though with many regrets. But he was now too advanced in age to work longer in a tropical climate. He had already given over thirty years to that country. Gladly would he have worked on, and died there; but unless he left soon, his life would shortly be cut off. And it was probable that in the homeland, whither he was returning, he might yet prolong his days for the furtherance of the cause that he loved so well; for, as we have already seen, one may work effectively for Calcutta, though he were half the distance around the globe. So Mr. Thomas knew that he was not to be altogether separated from the school that, under his administration, had grown to be one of

the marvels among transforming agencies in that remarkable land.

As they neared the time of their departure, these two faithful laborers, in fields so wide apart, looking out over the regions yet untrodden by a missionary, were weighed down with unspeakable sorrow for the teeming, helpless multitudes. Since they first enlisted, many other missionaries had been coming; yet, O! the need was still so great! And it came to pass that, bending under their burden, the gray-haired man in Calcutta, and the woman in Foochow, prayed—prayed mightily that God would provide the needed means. For in the homeland were young people waiting to be sent; in the foreign land were native agencies waiting to be used; and all about them were the people hungry for the Bread of Life; and in the hands of Christians was enough money to put all these unused forces to work. And these stewards are everywhere in Christendom—in America, Great Britain, Australia, South Africa, and even in the Orient—wherever those who name his name hold his silver and his gold. You, reader, are one of them; and whether you have much or little, you owe a part of it to hasten His coming.

Thus, those two prayed—prayed that God would send the money; for it seemed that everything else was provided. They prayed and waited; and still they waited and prayed; they prayed and waited on, until—such is the weakness of human faith—they began to doubt whether God heard them. Could he not hear? Was it true, after all, that the kingdom of darkness was to prevail?

But patience, patience, doubting hearts! Think ye not that God cares far more than ye can care for the building up of his kingdom? Think ye that God does not bend in tenderness and compassion over his children that cry for him day and night? Think ye that he does not hear your prayer, or, hearing, has not power to answer? Patience! Wait on him, and he will incline unto you and hear your cry!

Chapter XXVI

Do It Now

They could not see—those two missionaries—how very near was the answer to their prayers. They could not see that, even as they waited, the answer was on its way—yea, having crossed the ocean, was at their very door. But so it was. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me," saith the Almighty. And his promise was not to fail them. Others were also praying, as they beheld the ever-whitening fields.

Nearly six years had passed since Mr. Hetherington received that letter from his daughter, which impelled him to a new course of action. Now that his arrangements were complete, he came once again, as he often had done before during the progress of his plan, to secure the approval of his wife.

"I think it time we took this step," said he.

"Yes, I have thought it ought to be done."

"Just this afternoon, I learned of a case in point. In New York State, one Kenyon, worth a hundred thousand dollars, died, leaving a defective will. He had been, as most people thought, very penurious, giving little to any object whatever. It was only after he was gone that his will disclosed the fact that he had any benevolent intentions. It appeared, then, that he was a broader-minded man than people had supposed. Only he had employed the wrong method to exert the best influence.

"It seems he had no near relatives. So he left two thousand dollars to some cousins, and five thousand dollars to a college. The rest of his property, over ninety thousand dollars, was to go to the Missionary Board, where it would be distributed equally between the home and foreign fields.

"The Board sent its attorney to look after the case. When he had completed his investigation, he said that, on account of the imperfect form of the will, the law of the State would allow him to take but half of the property. So the Missionary Society failed to get forty-five thousand dollars that it would have had if the man's wish could have been carried out."

"Yes," said Alice, "doubtless the Church loses hundreds of thousands every year, simply because Christians cling to their money, and let others administer to suit themselves. I am convinced that the only safe course for a man is to administer his own property."

"And so, my dear, I have made this disposition of ours," he said, handing her a paper on which he had written out a considerable list of worthy enterprises, some in the homeland and some in the foreign, which were shortly to become joyful recipients of his gifts. Two items in the list called for large amounts, both because of the need which they represented, and of a very personal interest in two beloved workers. All the money on the interest of which he had been living (Lewis having taken his father's place in the drygoods house) was to be put at once where so much needed. And for the use of this money the missionary authorities were to pay him an annuity during the remainder of his life. Thus his own support would be assured,

and large sums of money, intended for benevolent purposes, would not run the risk of being diverted by bank failures, depreciation of values, and like vicissitudes. Or, if no such mishap should befall them, moneys that might be hoarded fifteen or twenty years would thus be made to work all that time.

It may occur to some that these hundreds of thousands of dollars should have kept on multiplying during the remaining years of Mr. Hetherington's life, and, at the end of that time, gone forth, a greatly augmented sum, on its errand of mercy. But could not the Lord more successfully invest such funds? And did it ever occur to you, reader, that the results of your offering, during twenty years in the work of redemption, might amount to far more than you ever could secure by your own investment? Think a moment! If you were to withhold your gift, what would you have at the end of twenty years? At the most, a few thousands of dollars; but, behind you, twenty years of lost opportunity! twenty years in which the waiting millions in some province had listened in vain for the sound of your coming! twenty years in which the King could have wrought marvels with your gift in that far-away land! And the increase would be, not money only—yet even its money value might equal what your gift could now purchase, in schools, churches, hospitals, dispensaries, and the like—but far more. Among the items of increase you could count souls by the hundreds, yea, possibly thousands, that, because of your gift two decades before, had heard the story of the blessed Christ! Whether is better, then, think you, to increase your own money, or let him do it?

At any rate, Ward Hetherington, at this time in his life, chose the latter course. And when such gifts were sorely needed, his came to cheer the hearts of workers both at home and abroad, while several thousands went toward lifting the remnant of debt that still burdened the Missionary Society.

And, friend, you who have money and could do likewise—for you know who you are, and God knows—ought you not to do as Ward Hetherington did? Ought you not to do it now? Then, yours would be the joy of hastening the Sun's rising in the Orient.

It was so ordered that the very day on which Ward completed this plan, the burden of prayer, as he learned afterward, fell likewise on those two missionaries.

Mr. Hetherington took up paper and pen to write to his daughter of what he had done for Foochow, and to Mr. Thomas of what he had done for Calcutta.

"Has it occurred to you, Alice," he said to his wife, who sat near by, penning a few lines to Bertha concerning matters of family interest, "how God is simply waiting now upon the gifts of his people? It seems as though everything is ready now for the consecrated gifts of the Church. Here are the railways, the steamships, the telegraph, the printing-press, the postal service—all tending to facilitate the work. Here are evangelistic, educational, and medical agencies already in the field. Many native men and women in their own land are trained for service better than that of strangers. And we have here young men and women waiting to be sent."

"That certainly is so," said Alice.

Soon the letters were written and posted—those two letters containing the answers to the prayers of the two missionaries.

And could you have looked in, a few weeks later, at the end of that season of praying and waiting, upon those two missionaries, in receipt of the long-waited-for answers to their prayers, you might have wished that you, too, had helped to make those answers possible. Just when it seemed that the labors of years in those two distant cities would go down in a night, because of the financial depression that periodically visits the civilized world—just then, when it was most needed, the money came. And soul-saving agencies in two heathen cities stood the financial storm because some one determined to give now!

"Alice," said Mr. Hetherington to his wife a few weeks later, "it is wonderful how much compensation there is in all this work."

"Certainly. What have you in mind just now?"

"This giving away of our property has brought the crowning blessing of our lives; and I am convinced that it has been of incalculable good to the children. It is often ruinous to a young man to rest himself in the thought that he is to fall heir to a fortune. I am sure that such a prospect would not have helped our boys. As it is, they have known that they were to stand or fall by their own efforts."

"That is true," said Alice. "Lewis told me the other night that the best deed you ever did for him was to give a large sum of money to some benevolent object. He did not know how it was, but every time such a gift

went, it made him feel that much more a man. He was delighted when he knew that you proposed dedicating so much property. I wish you could have seen him that night—he looked so noble, as he stood before me holding his own Ward by the hand. Then he put his hand on the little fellow's head, and, looking down into his face, said: 'This boy is to be put through the same process of training.'"

"I am grateful, indeed, that he takes it so," said Mr. Hetherington.

"And Harold and Carlotta," said Alice; "of course, we knew they would rejoice over what you have done. What a beautiful woman Carlotta is! You remember the first year after her graduation, when she taught music in the Ladies' Seminary, she gave twenty-five dollars of her salary to the famine orphans of India, besides a like sum to her home Church. She reminds me so much of Lucile Fenton. And she does love that little Bertha of hers. She thinks there never was another baby born; and she makes a charming mother. By the way, speaking of her reminds me of Cousin Charles. He passed along the street as I sat with Carlotta."

"What about him?"

"He is growing so old of late."

"Well, that is not so strange," said Ward; "it is the case with the most of us."

"Certainly," said she; "but he has not grown old gracefully, like some people."

"Like yourself, for instance," laughed Ward.

"Well, like any one who is a Christian," said his wife. "You remember when you and Carlotta and

Charles and I rode out to the cemetery in the summer?"

"Yes, very well."

"He and I strolled on ahead of you a little, until we stood reverently beside Lucile's grave. Beneath her name on the shaft are the words, 'Asleep in Jesus.' The memory of that sweet girl touched us both, and we stood for a time in silence. Finally, I said: 'When you are gone, Charles, can that be written of you?' He said nothing for a little, then he replied: 'Well, I do n't know; I hardly think it.' And he hardly looked it that day as he passed Carlotta's home. He is stooped a little, and he seems sad and disappointed, like one who all his life has followed a phantom, and now, having lost his compass altogether, drifts aimlessly."

"It is pitiful to see a man like that. And yet, now and then, we meet one who has powers that might have been used for the accomplishment of great good, and have led to a triumphant and glorious old age."

"Yes," said his wife, "but the Christian's hope puts meaning into the humblest life. It explains the darkest enigma. And I long to have the tidings of this hope published throughout the world."

"It is this hope, Alice, that has put meaning into our lives. Our money has not done it; our social standing has not done it; our children have not done it; nothing has done it but this hope. And this hope has helped us so to use these other gifts that they also have proved blessings."

Thus they sat and conversed that winter evening in their beautiful home. Not aged, you would think, could you have witnessed their power of mind and

body, though certainly nearing the limit of man's allotted time.

A great work, think you, this man had accomplished? Yes, a great work, a marvelous work. Enduring monuments of his liberality rose in many a land. Pastor-teachers all over India owed to him the unspeakable privilege of teaching the gospel. Native preachers on the plains and in the mountains of China owed their support to his gifts. Hospitals, dispensaries, theological schools and colleges, here and there, in India, China, Japan, and Africa, in Mexico and South America, on account of his gifts, were helped to continue their life-dealing ministries. And many a corner of the homeland had likewise been cheered by his timely beneficence. Yet, they were not his gifts at all; and he never so considered them. He was merely steward of the Lord's treasure. Yes, Ward Hetherington's "vision of doing good" had been more than a "sanguine mirage." During his nearly threescore years and ten he had accomplished a work, the results of which were beyond computation. But, reader, reckoned by the divine standard, he had done no more than you may do, with all your powers of mind and wealth and social standing devoted to the service of the King of kings!

Chapter XXVII

Enough at Home

A FEW weeks more, and winter was on. The sound of wind in the woods, the frost in the air, creeping in unbidden through crack and crevice into many an unsheltered home, the snow sweeping down the valleys and over the hills and across the plains, caused many an unfortunate man to look upon the cruel winter as a relentless foe.

An unprecedented financial depression of long continuance had closed national banks, had brought disaster to many large commercial enterprises, and had shut down mills and factories, so that in some towns not one was running; consequently, hundreds of thousands of men were without employment. It was such a winter as had not been experienced in some parts of the country for a quarter of a century. Many of these unemployed men were without food, without fuel, without sufficient clothing. Many of them in this land of plenty, in this land of gospel privilege, were actually starving and freezing—freezing and starving beside large coalyards and within the shadow of immense grain elevators.

In one of our great western cities alone, forty thousand of these unfortunate people must either receive help at the hand of charity or perish. To prevent such a calamity, the mayor of the city had issued a proclamation making urgent appeal to all who had means

to contribute at once to the relief of the sufferers. And contributions of money, clothing, coal, and food came pouring in. Soup-houses, shelters, and police stations were crowded with refugees from the frozen streets.

Forty thousand starving in one of our flourishing cities! Yet forty thousand here are not as many as forty million starving over in India! But they are our own who are starving now; they are our neighbors and our neighbors' children; and we feel it. In this time of unrest and uncertainty, we know not what turn of the wheel may roll us and our children under; and we tremble. For the man who to-day, of his abundance, deals out bread to the hungry, may to-morrow ask alms from door to door.

At such a time as this, and to such scenes of destitution, came those two missionaries of our acquaintance —the one from famine and plague stricken India, the other from "long-suffering China"—with hearts laden for the needs of the people among whom they had so long labored. While, on the one hand, the civilized world was waiting to know what should be the outcome of the struggle for liberty on the island of Cuba, on the other it had been repeatedly horrified by the butchery of helpless Christians in Armenia, beneath the snows of whose mountains the mangled corpses of her people cry for vengeance!

The one plea that on former occasions had been offered in excuse for a disbelief in foreign missions now received emphasis from the need in our own country; and "enough at home" was the watchword upon many a lip.

It had been ten years since Mr. Thomas had taken a

furlough. Now he had returned for the last time, to remain the rest of his days in his own land.

O, could you have seen the veterans, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Hetherington, when they met, you would have seen a sight that you never could forget! Having in early manhood worked in such pleasant relations in the same beautiful city, and now for a third of a century having wrought, in fields so wide apart, for the coming of the kingdom in the same beloved land, the one enabled to crown his labors there because the other here had not only given during all those years, but at the last had given heroically—all this coming to the thought of the two men, as they met once more after their long separation, almost overwhelmed them with emotions of joy and gratitude.

"Hetherington," said Mr. Thomas, just after they were seated in the home of the former, "you do not know how your last gift put courage into our workers in Calcutta and spread light over all India. For my part, I think I never should have lived to come away, had it not been for you. It surely would have been the death of me to see the results of my thirty years' work go under at the last. But God was good, and our work remains to exalt him throughout that land. His name be praised for the victory!"

"And yet, my dear Thomas, there are some who plead, with real force, and I think honest conviction, in this winter of destitution, that there are enough to be helped at home. Even without this unusual distress, they candidly think that the needs of our own country at this time demand all our benefactions."

Here Mr. Clarke was admitted to the parlor, and,

with him to add color to the argument, the conversation continued as before.

"Well," said Mr. Thomas, after greeting his old-time acquaintance, "I do not suppose we are asked to take bread from our own children's mouths to feed the children of strangers."

"Is n't that what the Church is doing," said Mr. Clarke, "when, in face of this need, she sends all her missionary money across the sea."

"Only about half of it goes as you indicate."

"But that half of it ought not to go. There is enough work in our own land to keep all the missionaries in the world busy. There are plague-spots in our own cities, and there are social conditions throughout our country that demand all our energies. I tell you, my good brother," said Mr. Clarke, waxing vehement, "I tremble for the future of America!"

"I certainly admit," said Mr. Thomas, "that the conditions warrant such agitation. This is a time to make thinking men tremble. I have often thought there was great force in the proposition: 'Save America for the sake of the world!' And yet I think there is as much force in the proposition to save the world for the sake of America! So long as there is one pestiferous nation on the face of the globe, the whole world is in danger of infection. What causes the plague-spots in any of our American cities but the pouring in of illiterate, diseased, and criminal hordes from those very lands which we seek to evangelize? Whence the race troubles in New Orleans and San Francisco? I tell you, my friend, the gospel must triumph in every land, or it must fail in America."

"Well," said Mr. Clarke, rather evading the point, "I do not see how you benefit them much. What is the good of disturbing them by introducing Christianity? Why not let them alone?"

"Would that, in some regards, we might let them alone! They would fare better than they now do. But we do not let them alone."

"I do not understand how that is," said Mr. Clarke, in some surprise.

"Just a little and I will explain. Do you remember our first conversation, forty years ago? You were urging upon me the study of law."

"O, yes, I remember."

"Well, I take it you believe in justice."

"Certainly, with all my heart, I do. And that is why I beg of you to be just with our own perishing people."

"That is all right. But suppose I had willfully wronged the child of a stranger, should I still devote all my time and strength to the needs of my own family, which seem rightly to demand my energy; or shall I go and try to make amends for the wrong I have done?"

"The latter, of course."

"Well, then, you are compelled to admit the justice of carrying the gospel to the heathen; and you are compelled to admit that Christian nations, if for no other reason, must give the gospel to the unchristian world, in reparation for damages inflicted."

"I still fail to understand you."

"You will see presently. In these days of commerce, invention, and discovery, we are thrusting

western civilization upon the nations of the East. We are forcing it upon them, whether they want it or not. And, attendant upon this, as we think, better civilization, are awful evils, that mock us Christian people in the eyes of the pagan world. Christian nations send 'fire-water' to Africa, until one of its native kings pleads with us to send 'more gospel and less rum.' We cultivate the poppy in India, until the impoverished soil, in the time of extreme drought, can not supply the needs of the people; a famine results, the severest since the beginning of foreign rule in that land; and people by the millions are starving. At the point of the bayonet, we force the opium-trade upon China, in spite of the fact that her Emperor pleads with us not to ruin his people; and all this we do that we may gather wealth. If we give them this, should we not, in justice, give them the gospel? We dare not withhold it; in safety to ourselves, we dare not."

"You certainly make a strong case," said Mr. Clarke, "and yet, the fact staggers me that your own nation is in imminent peril."

"That may be true," said Mr. Thomas; "but, pray, let us not attempt to save ourselves by withdrawing help from those nations to whom we owe so much; for we should certainly fail."

After Mr. Clarke had departed, and Mr. Thomas and Mr. Hetherington sat again alone before the grate, the missionary said: "I do not wonder that many people can see no farther than our own borders. I do not so much wonder that those who look at it from limited knowledge and observation see as Mr. Clarke does, and consider that our obligation ends at the gateway

of our nation. I always feel like sitting down and talking with one who thus honestly doubts the wisdom of regarding other people's needs, when our own seem so great."

At an early hour, Mr. Thomas sought rest. Sitting alone in the beautiful guest-room, he thought over the conversation of the hour before. Indeed, he was troubled. At that moment, he felt impelled to go forth and help right the wrongs in his own land—they seemed so enormous as he looked at them that night. But he who had almost given his life for India, and would gladly have given another, were it his, to his own land, was content to leave the outcome of his country in the hands of Him who ruleth the nations.

Chapter XXVIII

All One Work

The months passed, and it was again fall. During the spring and summer, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, though too much broken, as we have intimated, to work longer in India, had furnished many proofs that their force was not altogether abated as workers in the homeland. Many an audience had been swayed under his powerful and eloquent appeals; many a missionary collection had been doubled; many a laborer in the far-off field had been encouraged by the increased help; and not a few young men and women had gone forth as heralds of "good tidings" to the forlorn habitations of the world.

It was just sunset of a pleasant autumn evening as, arm in arm, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas strolled up the street on which stood the little parsonage where they began life together. The same dwelling was still there, though a more commodious house had long ago taken its place as parsonage; and a much larger church than the one in which, years ago, they had ministered to their little flock, now stood upon the corner.

They did not speak until they had passed the house; and then they saw the moon low in the eastern sky.

"They are the same moon and stars, dear," said he, "which shone down upon us that summer night, over thirty years ago, after we had watched the departure of Dr. Powers."

And as they passed down the street where, in the days long gone by, he had so often walked arm in arm with some troubled brother, as he tried to prevail upon him to yield to Christ, the nearly half-century of heroic and varied ministry seemed to rise before him.

Having completed their walk among the scenes that had once been so familiar, they returned to the home of the Hetheringtons, where they were to stop during the annual session of the Woman's Executive Committee in St. Paul's.

. . . . . .

The delegates have been in conference ten days for the examination of estimates from the mission fields, the appropriation of funds for the year to come, and for the disposal of other necessary business in connection with their great work. It is the last afternoon of the meeting.

Mr. Thomas, now, as we know, an old man with "hoary head" and shoulders somewhat bent with years, has been present during the entire session. And his zeal for India has not abated. Sitting there, as he has done during those days, a sharer of the joys and anxieties of those women, there has burned in his soul such a longing for India's redemption as, even in the vigor of his youth, he never felt.

Ward Hetherington, also crowned with "glory," but still erect and strong in physique, in company with his noble wife, is there, and, sitting like a father among them, as he hears once more the bitter story of loneliness, despair, and hopeless death from the lips of the "beloved missionaries." While they tell, as they have told again and again, of the thick darkness

that enshrouds the peoples among whom they toil, his heart goes out in longing to those hundreds of thousands of the Lord's children who, crowned with plenty in this Christian land, have yet let the hungry, perishing multitudes pass. The silver and the gold that were His they have withheld. The piteous cry that has come up from the heathen night they have not heeded. Somehow, feeling, as he does, that this is a moment of supreme opportunity for all Christ's followers, he longs, with intensity unfelt before, for the time speedily to come when, by every child of redeeming grace, this cry of a lost world shall be heard.

The closing hour has come. A holy stillness rests upon the people as Mr. Thomas, in response to a question from Mrs. Hetherington, rises to speak once more concerning India. Making his way slowly through the crowd, he stands facing them. Down in front of the speaker a pair of very earnest brown eyes fill with tears for China's long-waiting daughters, as she looks eagerly into the face of him who pleads yet again the cause of the lost multitudes. A pair of blue eyes, also, fill with tears; for Christine, though called to work for her unfortunate sisters in the homeland, always yearned for those people whom Bertha loved; and the two heroic workers have sat side by side during all the sessions of that great gathering. Now the vast concourse of people are bending forward to catch every word that falls from the lips of the prophetic Thomas; for he stands before them like a seer whose face is lighted by a vision of the Lord Christ. And one from the audience (many said afterward that, at that moment, he seemed like a spirit gliding among

them), slowly rising, silently moves toward the front. Mr. Thomas, spirit answering to spirit, moves to meet Mr. Hetherington; and there, before all the people, they fall upon each other's neck—the most touching spectacle, thus far, of the whole convention. The entire audience are on their feet. Some are weeping; some are shouting. It is one of those moments when the exultation of the soul is almost too great to bear. What can people do but shout? In this exalted moment, the work that is afar off seems to have come so very near. India and America, "heart to heart" and "hand to hand," stand embracing each other. "All one work," is heard from the lips of some one near by; and how plain it seems just then that the man who labors in the city or on the frontier, in our own land, is doing like work with the man who plunges into heathen darkness!

During this extraordinary scene, one wrinkled old man sits unnoticed back in the audience.

"Some forty years ago," he says to himself, "I was pleading with Thomas not to bury himself among the heathen; and now, look at him! Hear the shouts and cries of these people as they behold him! He is not buried at all, but is the hero of the hour! And I, what am I? I who chose my work for my own advantage, I suppose no one even knows that I am here. Soon I shall drop out of the world, and few will care that I am gone."

Meanwhile, the two venerable men still stand with bowed heads before the exultant people. A little later, when all is quiet, the organist, as if moved by the Spirit, plays very softly, as though it were a prayer

from the hearts of those veterans, "Pilot me!" The sweet strains of music having ceased, Lewis Hetherington's little Ward comes softly up the steps to the two old men. Mr. Thomas places his hand upon the boy's head. The people feel that upon the shoulders of the lad will fall the mantle of the heroic missionary. Then Mr. Thomas and Mr. Hetherington sit down together.

Mrs. Hetherington, resuming her place as presiding officer, is about to adjourn the convention, when, lo! her eye catches the figure of a woman, short of stature, just entering a door at the rear. Possibly, though you look sharply, you do not see any resemblance to the fair young lady whom you met years ago as Helen Galbraith. But she is known to most of those there, and as people crowd back to let her by, she walks up the aisle to the "Chautauqua salute." Beautiful yet is this dear mother. As you look into her face, your eyes fill with tears. Her hair, in white puffs, lies beneath a black bonnet. She wears a dress of silver gray—a silk and wool fabric, given to her by a Mohammedan princess. At her throat, white illusion is caught by a little silver pin, while from a short silver chain hangs pendent a silver cross of the "King's Daughters." She has just returned from a prolonged visit to our mission stations in the far East. She has broken the Bread of Life to the native youths in our schools—even addressing young men in institutions of learning, across whose threshold a woman's foot had never before stepped. She has come face to face with the deep needs of those people. She has seen the hunger staring from their

hollow eyes and sunken cheeks. She has seen them, clothed in the rags of their poverty and covered with the shame of their sin, tottering through the streets of their desolate villages. And again—O blessed sight!—she has seen them, "clothed and in their right mind," standing before her as monuments of saving grace. And she has seen the missionaries—the weary, overworked, but courageous missionaries—living out their lives to save a few of this vast multitude that is thronging for admission into the Church of the one true God—longing, many of them, to see the "King in his beauty," but unable to find the way because there is no one to teach them.

Among other places in her itinerary, she has touched Yokohama, Tokio and Hirosaki, Foochow and Chinkiang, Singapore, Rangoon, Calcutta, Lucknow, Naini Tal, and Bombay.

And now Mother Foster, the dearly loved Mother Foster, who, possibly, reminds you of your own mother, and who calls you "daughter" when she meets you, stands before this company of Christian men and women with a message that thrills every heart. Nobody weeps, and nobody shouts. A silence, more impressive than any vocal demonstration, rests upon the people with a power that holds every face in that great throng intently fixed upon the speaker. She is telling of what she has seen of the triumphs of the kingdom in the lands where she has been.

"And now," says she, "I would that one of the seraphim might take of the live coals from off the altar, and empower my lips to speak the message that is burning in my soul; for I have longed to proclaim it;

and when I heard that voice saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' I replied, 'Here am I; send me.'

"May I not believe that he has sent me to you this afternoon? But how shall I tell a tithe of all that I have seen? For, indeed, beloved, 'mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts,' in his triumphant march through the dominions of this world.

"O, to have had a part in the glorious triumph! It is worth while; and it has all helped to make possible the victories of this hour. Your mothers and mine, now in glory, were soldiers in Christ's all-conquering army." (And Grace Chandler George, in her heart, said, "Amen!") "Little Jamie Latimer, whose form early slept, helped to raise recruits for the conquest of those distant lands. Mr. Hetherington at my left, his noble wife in the chair, and their beloved daughter who sits before me—may God bless her and her marvelous work in China!—they have all had a part in this glorious warfare. And the friend of that daughter, who sits beside her this afternoon, Christine Hargrave, who, though she would gladly have gone to the front, has yet worked just as nobly in her more quiet corner, has had a part in it. And the venerable missionary, Mr. Thomas—O, what can I say of the crown that rests upon his head to-day because of that magnificent school in Calcutta? Friends, you who have helped to support that school know not what consolation it hath brought to thousands of homes all over India. Mr. Thomas and his wife have had a large part in the beginnings of the victory that shall be. Yes, and not they alone, but

their two precious children, who, after being educated in America, returned to the land of their adoption; and even those hundreds of other men and women and children—some blind, some lame, some poor, very poor—who have wrought, unseen by the world, in quiet corners, have all added to the welcome of the King. Through such variety of service has the Lord been exalted."

And now, she seems held by a prophetic vision. Looking out over their heads, she says: "Just a little way yonder I see a day coming when all this seed-sowing shall have ripened into a glorious harvest. All over the plains and hills of India, I see sheaves garnered for the Master. Down in Malaysia, on all the islands of the sea, and in Japan, I behold his kingdom risen. Throughout China—along her riotous rivers, in her great cities, in the north and the south, and the east and the west—I see her temples dedicated to the Prince of Peace. Africa I see, at length, redeemed, and Europe, Mexico, and South America freed from the thralldom of ages.

"But before that glad day I see another that must surely come—a day when there shall roll over our own land such a missionary wave as shall thrill all hearts and set the sacred treasure flowing. Even a Buddhist magazine predicts that 'The greatest movement of the twentieth century will not be a commercial one, nor yet a military one; but the nations of the West will invade the East with great armies of Christian missionaries, backed up by the wealth of Christendom.'"

And as the sunlight of the afternoon, falling softly

"I See that Day Coming"

through the richly-stained windows, rests in benediction upon her white head, she simply says: "I see that day coming, not very far away; but, beloved"—and would that you could have heard her say that word—"beloved, ere that day comes, you will have to pray as you never prayed before, and believe as you never believed before, and give as you never gave before. Thus will you herald the glad hour when

> 'He shall reign from pole to pole
> With illimitable sway;
> He shall reign, when, like a scroll,
> Yonder heavens have passed away:
> Then the end;—beneath his rod,
> Man's last enemy shall fall;
> Hallelujah! Christ in God,
> God in Christ, is all in all!'"

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